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Eric Kuhne's Path To and Through Bluewater

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Introduction

Bluewater Shopping Centre is arguably the most important project in the portfolio of its architect Eric Kuhne. At the time of his appointment as its Concept Designer[1] in 1994, his fledgling architecture firm CivicArts had only been involved in three other projects – none of which had been shopping centres[2].

After five years, Kuhne's work on Bluewater finished, and it opened on March 16th 1999 as the single largest shopping centre in Europe[3]. Since then it has become one of Europe's leading retail, leisure, dining and entertainment destinations[4], welcoming an impressive 28 million guests every year[5] and flourishing despite a recession[6], negative market trends[7] and the emergence of online shopping[8]. In many ways, Bluewater became Kuhne's calling card, and in the years that followed, his work with CivicArts would take him all over the world to present his ideas about retail and architecture before Kings, Presidents, Sheikhs and Emirs[9].

The purpose of this paper is to examine the life and constitution of Eric Kuhne in the context of Bluewater. This is done to deduce the specific elements of Kuhne's pre- and mid-Bluewater life that afforded the project such success. The time frame studied will therefore be limited to the period between Kuhne's birth in 1951 and Bluewater's completion in 1999. This will be done over two distinct chapters which will explore:

1) **Eric Kuhne's Path *To* Bluewater** – his early family life, formal education and early career.
2) **Eric Kuhne's Path *Through* Bluewater** – his beliefs, methods and approach to the design.

These subjects will be examined using video/audio recordings, magazine/newspaper articles, internet research, academic writings, original diagrams, and primary data (in the form of interviews undertaken by the author with two individuals who worked with Kuhne[ε]).

It is significant, and should be made clear, that the architecture firm Benoy will not be studied here. Though they are credited as Project Architect of Bluewater, they were employed exclusively as draftsmen to translate Kuhne's concept sketches into technically accurate and buildable plans[10], and are therefore not responsible for the success of Kuhne's overall vision for Bluewater.

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1 Michael Evamy, *Bluewater: Vision to Reality*, (London: Lend Lease, 1999), 67
2 "Projects By Current", CivicArts, accessed January 31, 2017. http://www.civicarts.com/projects-by-current. See also: Michael Evamy, Bluewater: Vision to Reality, 64
3 "BBC Local History, Bluewater: 10 Years On", last modified March 16, 2009. http://www.bbc.co.uk/kent/content/articles/2009/03/13/bluewater_history_feature.shtml
4 Unknown,"An Introduction to Bluewater", *Bluewater Student Pack*, (Bluewater Management: 2016).
5 Unknown,"An Introduction to Bluewater, 2016
6 "Bluewater and John Lewis Beat the Recession", *Kent Online*, last modified May 18, 2010. http://www.kentonline.co.uk/kent-business/county-news/bluewater-and-john-lewis-beat-th-a85110/
7 Rosalind David, *Secondary Centres: The Impact Of The Recession On Secondary Shopping Centres*, published by the British Council of Shopping Centres, 2010, accessed January 31, 2017. https://www.revocommunity.org/documents/get_lob?age=&id=106&field=file
8 Lauren Davidson, "Internet-only stores to overtake retail giants' online sales this year", *The Telegraph*, published July 31, 2015, accessed January 31, 2017. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/retailandconsumer/11773421/Internet-only-stores-to-overtake-retail-giants-online-sales-this-year.html
9 Eric Kuhne speaking in *Eric Kuhne, Architect of Tomorrow (EG7)*, April 2013, accessed January 30, 2017. http://www.egconf.com/videos/eric-kuhne-architect-tomorrow-eg7. See also: John Holden in an interview with the author, 2016.
ε See Addendums A and B
10 Michael Evamy, *Bluewater: Vision to Reality*, 67

Figure 1: *Eric Robert Kuhne*

Chapter One

Eric Kuhne's Path To ~~and Through~~ Bluewater

I: Kuhne's Early Family Life

Eric Robert Kuhne was born in San Antonio, Texas[11] on September 2nd 1951. His father was a United States Air Force Master Navigator[12] and his mother a teacher[13]. His parents were his "greatest inspiration"[14], and there is evidence to suggest that they gave him a wholesome family upbringing. They read books together at mealtimes, and "would picnic in the desert under the stars in the world's largest aircraft graveyard[ϕ] discussing celestial patterns"[15]. He shared the following idyllic details about his childhood:

> "The library was always in the dining room. Growing up, when we had dinner, mum or dad would reach over their shoulder [to the bookshelf] and say "Well who is going to join us for dinner tonight?" and we would all squeal as kids. The great thoughts written within those books would end up replacing the plates on the table. Books were windows to the world for us."[16]

These interactions arguably ignited Kuhne's academia, imagination and view of the world, and allowed him to hone his communication skills from an early age[17]. These things would one day serve him well as Concept Designer of Bluewater – a role which required an intelligent mind, vibrant imagination and excellent communication skills.

Kuhne was raised in a military family which was periodically required to relocate[18] around the USA[χ]. This allowed him to encounter many different cultures and customs growing up, but arguably made him an outsider, never truly settling in one place for the duration of his childhood. As an outsider, Kuhne developed an objective view of the world and its diverse cultures. He also developed the ability to admire and honour them. This would prove key in his professional adult life, where he believed that architecture became a means for him to express such notions of admiration and honour for cultures which were not his own. He shared the following about the relationship between his nomadic childhood and resultant professional outlook:

> "We grew up knowing that the world's diversity was its strength, not it's weakness, and that the most important thing we could ever do whenever we travelled or did anything in our lives is honour the people whom we visited. Architecture just became the way I expressed that when I grew up."[19]

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[11] Jeremy Myerson, *Design Week*, "Bluewater Runs Deep", February 20, 1998, accessed January 17, 2017. https://www.designweek.co.uk/bluewater-runs-deep/

[12] Paul Cattermole, *Obituary of Eric Robert Kuhne*, 2016, accessed October 6, 2016, http://www.civicarts.com/eric-kuhne

[13] Eric Kuhne, *CTBUH Video Interview – Eric Kuhne*, published May 14, 2013, accessed October 10, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lQ64lOm9Mns&index=11&list=PLlzCDdzEwlF6MHLoiF9wVRwICLWothP0G

[14] Eric Kuhne, in an interview with Pia Heikkila, *Eric Kuhne Interview: Aladdin's Cave*, October 24, 2008, accessed January 18, 2017. http://www.building.co.uk/eric-kuhne-interview-aladdins-cave/3125603.article

[ϕ] Probably at the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona, see Lizzie Dearden, "World's largest plane graveyard of US military fighters in desert can now be explored online in amazing interactive map", *Independent,* February 28, 2015, accessed February 1, 2017. http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/worlds-largest-plane-graveyard-of-us-military-fighters-in-desert-can-now-be-explored-online-10077079.html

[15] Jeremy Myerson, "Bluewater Runs Deep", 1998

[16] Eric Kuhne, *CTBUH Video Interview – Eric Kuhne*, 2013

[17] Eliza Cook and Rachel Dunifon, *Do Family Meals Really Make a Difference?,* 2012, accessed January 14, 2017. http://www.human.cornell.edu/pam/outreach/upload/Family-Mealtimes-2.pdf

[18] Jeremy Myerson, "Bluewater Runs Deep", 1998

[χ] Including: Houston, Biloxi, Tampa, Tucson, Chicago and El Paso. See short biography "Eric Kuhne: Architect of Tomorrow", accessed February 1, 2017. http://www.egconf.com/presenters/eric-kuhne

[19] Eric Kuhne, *CTBUH Video Interview – Eric Kuhne*, 2013

This outlook was key on his path to Bluewater. As will be mentioned later, the two projects that preceded Bluewater were both located in the foreign culture of Australia. His designs for both were very successful and displayed his ability to enhance a culture that was not his own through architecture.

A key event in Kuhne's early life was the moment his father "inducted him into the art of perspective drawing... at the tender age of seven"[20]. Along with his intelligence, Kuhne's ability to draw would eventually earn him the privilege of being "educated at the prestigious universities of Rice and Princeton[α]"[21]. In an era before computer-aided design (CAD), draughtsmanship was among the most important qualifications an aspiring architect needed. His "innate ability to visualise his ideas with no more than pen and a sheet of Mylar[β] was arguably the cornerstone of his success", and it served him well throughout his formal education and career.

Kuhne grew up to be an arguably an analogue man, treasuring and leaning heavily upon his ability to draw perspectives by hand – even after the advent of CAD software. One architect visiting Eric's office during the design of Bluewater in the mid-1990s (when most offices had made the switch to drawing digitally, and "offices were beginning to look cleaner without paper everywhere"[22]) was surprised to be greeted by "enormous rolls of paper" and piles of Kuhne's hand-drawings[23]. This would prove key on his path to Bluewater. When it came time for him to draw the concept sketches of his vision for Bluewater, he didn't draw them isometrically or axonometrically – and he certainly didn't draw them on the computer. He drew them in the perspective style that his father had taught him as a child (Figure 2). These early images carried his clear vision of what Bluewater could be, masterfully portraying his ideas through first-person sketches rendered at eye-level. From these images, it could be argued that Lend Lease (who would end up investing £375 million in Kuhne's vision[24]) would see the potential that Kuhne saw and approve his costly designs.

[20] Paul Cattermole, *Obituary of Eric Robert Kuhne*, 2016

[α] Princeton, where Kuhne did his Master's, is in the *Ivy League* (a group of universities widely considered the top eight in the US), and one of the *Big Three* (widely considered the top three universities in the US).

[21] Paul Cattermole, *Obituary of Eric Robert Kuhne*, 2016

[β] polyester film or plastic sheet

[22] John Burrows (Design Consultant for The Water Circus (or South Village) of Bluewater Shopping Centre) in an interview with the author, November 2016.

[23] John Burrows, interview with the author, November 2016.

[24] "BBC Local History, Bluewater: 10 Years On", last modified March 16, 2009. http://www.bbc.co.uk/kent/content/articles/2009/03/13/bluewater_history_feature.shtml

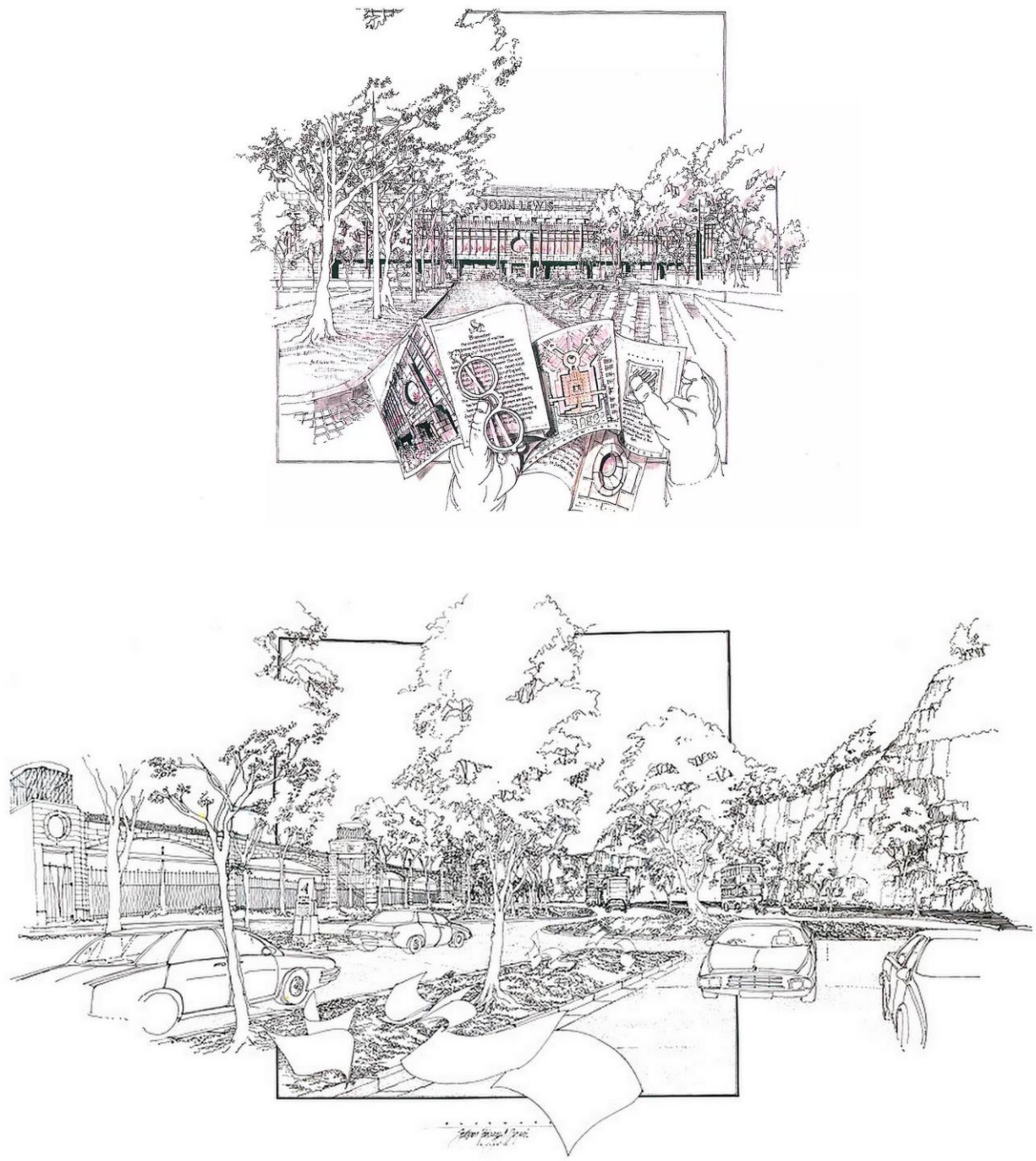

Figure 2: Kuhne's concept drawings for Bluewater.

II: Kuhne's Formal Education

A vital part of Kuhne's path to Bluewater was his architectural education. This took place for him at Rice University in the 1970s for his bachelor's degree, and Princeton University for his master's degree in 1981[25]. During this time he was privileged to be taught at the feet of two the most famous and influential architects of the 20th century: Philip Johnson and Michael Graves[26]. To understand the effect that these two giants of architecture had on Kuhne's architectural education, opinion and identity, it is necessary to discuss a few relevant details of their respective careers, contributions to modern architecture, and influence upon Kuhne's path to Bluewater.

Firstly, Philip Johnson, who was the elder of the two and regarded by some as "the dean of American architects… known less for his individual buildings than for the sheer force of his presence on the architectural scene… as a combination godfather, gadfly, scholar, patron, critic, curator and cheerleader"[27]. A thrilling episode featuring Kuhne and Johnson was Kuhne's final major college project – a replanning of Times Square in New York. Johnson, who was working as Times Square's own architect[28] at around that time, was a member of the examination board that awarded Kuhne's scheme the highest marks of anybody graduating that academic year[29]! This was probably an emboldening experience for young Kuhne on his path to Bluewater.

Figure 3: Philip Johnson

Among Johnson's first major contributions to architectural history before Kuhne came across him would be his helping to import and establish "Modernism" in the United States of America[30] alongside Alfred H. Barr Jr[31]. Modernism in architecture (or "The International Style"[32] (as Johnson and Barr coined it) came about as a reaction to the ornamental, nostalgic Revivalism and Eclecticism[33] of

25 Jeremy Myerson, *"Bluewater Runs Deep"*, 1998
26 Paul Cattermole, *Obituary of Eric Robert Kuhne*, 2016
27 Paul Goldberger, "Philip Johnson, Architecture's Restless Intellect, Dies at 98", *The New York Times*, January 27 2005, accessed 15 January 2017. http://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/27/arts/design/philip-johnson-architectures-restless-intellect-dies-at-98.html?_r=0
28 Paul Goldberger, "Philip Johnson… Dies at 98", *The New York Times*, 2005
29 Jeremy Myerson, *"Bluewater Runs Deep"*, 1998
30 Tom Wolfe, *From Bauhaus to Our House*, (London: Pan Books, 1993) 74
31 Paul Makovsky, *Metropolis Magazine*, "Partners in Design", November 2015, accessed January 18, 2017. http://www.metropolismag.com/November-2015/Partners-in-Design/
32 Henry Russel Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, *The International Style*, (New York: Norton, 1966). See also: Tom Wolfe, *From Bauhaus to Our House*, 71
33 Dennis Sharp, *A Visual History of Twentieth-Century Architecture,* (London : Lund Humphries, 1991), 6

19th century architecture. It started in Europe as an "art compound"[34] (or an artistic association separate from the establishment) called The Bauhaus, whose style is characterised by a distinct lack of ornamentation (Viennese Moderist Adolf Loos famously equated ornament with crime[35]), "precise geometric shapes… structural honesty and clearly defined volumes"[36] – all principles well-illustrated by, for instance, Walter Gropius' Bauhaus building in Dessau (1925)[37]. The movement was a calculated departure from the historic and bourgeois connotations of Neo-Classicism, with its design mantra "Starting from Zero"[38] suggesting a clean slate.

Johnson was an acolyte and close associate of the Modernist giant Mies van der Rohe[39]. He gave van der Rohe his first commission in the US (the renovation of his own New York apartment[40]) and contributed furnishing and restaurant designs for van der Rohe's infamous Seagram Building[41] in 1958 (Figure 4). Arguably their most famous collaboration, the Seagram Building stands as an essay in Modernist design principles, with its extruded rectangular form, generous use of transparent glass, and limited amount of applied decoration. It sent shockwaves that rippled all over the US and down through architectural history, becoming an American Modernist monument[42] of great import. Some people would reportedly come to pay their respects to the building by kneeling before it[43], others would call it the most important building of the millennium[44] – but there is evidence to suggest that Eric Kuhne would have *loathed* it. He was himself a self-confessed "child of modernism" due to his education under Johnson and the like, but he "tired of

Figure 4: *The Seagram Building*

34 Tom Wolfe, *From Bauhaus to Our House*, 16
35 Dennis Sharp, *A Visual History of Twentieth-Century Architecture,* 6
36 Dennis Sharp, *A Visual History of Twentieth-Century Architecture,* 7
37 Tom Wolfe, *From Bauhaus to Our House*, 13
38 Tom Wolfe, *From Bauhaus to Our House*, 12, 48
39 Paul Goldberger, "Philip Johnson… Dies at 98", *The New York Times*, 2005
40 Paul Makovsky, "Partners in Design", November 2015
41 Adelyn Perez, "AD Classics: Seagram Building/Mies van der Rohe" May 10, 2010, accessed January 16, 2017. http://www.archdaily.com/59412/seagram-building-mies-van-der-rohe
42 Tom Wolfe, *From Bauhaus to Our House*, 74
43 Dennis Sharp, *A Visual History of Twentieth-Century Architecture,* 223
44 Herbert Muschamp, "Best Buildings; Opposites Attract", *The New York* Times, April 18, 1999, accessed January 16, 2017. http://www.nytimes.com/1999/04/18/magazine/best-building-opposites-attract.html

the doctrine"[45], and it became a movement that he intensely hated. A close colleague and long-term friend shared:

> "…if you said the word *Modernism* to Eric, he would just spit blood at you. You could say 'Tell me why you hate modernism' – 'With ease, how long have you got?', he might say."[46]

It could be argued that Kuhne was averse to Hitchcock and Johnson's Modernist concept of an "International Style"[47] (or a style that could be used internationally with no regard for history or culture of the nation in which it is found). As mentioned earlier, Kuhne moved often as a child, and by the time he came to work in the UK on Bluewater as an adult he had lived and worked in various regions of the US, and Australia, and had learned to study and respect the diverse cultures he had encountered along the way. He did not believe in the "one-style-fits-all" premise of Modernism, and after it had taken hold internationally, he had witnessed some countries forsake their culture and history in their breathless pursuit to modernise[48], and felt this was wrong.

Johnson, along with other Modernists like Edward Durrell Stone[49] and Eero Saarinen[50] would eventually move away from Modernism to explore other avenues. Kuhne's other teacher, the younger Michael Graves (who proved more influential upon him than Johnson[51]) was inspired by Modernism[52] towards the beginning of his career, even jumping to its defense 1969[53] as part of a group of architects/academics called "The New York Five". He later defected from the movement, and went on to spearhead what would become known as "*Post*-Modernism" (a term simultaneously coined and called into question by Charles Jencks' 1986 book "What is Post-Modernism?"[54]). Graves' Postmodernism treated architecture as a "humanistic discipline"[55] rather than

Figure 5: *The Young Michael Graves would one day teach and hire Eric Kuhne. Pictured here beside a boxy architectural model inspired by the Modernist Movement – a movement which he would go on to champion and eventually transcend before teaching Kuhne at Princeton.*

[45] Jeremy Myerson, *"Bluewater Runs Deep"*, 1998
[46] John Holden (Former Senior Design Director at CivicArts, Long-Term Friend and Colleague of Eric Kuhne) in an interview with the author, October 2016
[47] Henry Russel Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, *The International Style*, 1966
[48] Pia Heikkila, *Eric Kuhne Interview: Aladdin's Cave*, October 24, 2008, accessed January 18, 2017. http://www.building.co.uk/eric-kuhne-interview-aladdins-cave/3125603.article
[49] Tom Wolfe, *From Bauhaus to Our House*, 85-7
[50] Tom Wolfe, *From Bauhaus to Our House*, 89-92
[51] Paul Cattermole, *Obituary of Eric Kuhne*, 2016
[52] Unknown, "Michael Graves, Architect - Obituary", *The Telegraph*, published March 15, 2015, accessed 19 January, 2017. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/11473303/Michael-Graves-architect-obituary.html
[53] Nadia Watson (2005) "The Whites vs the Grays: re-examining the 1970s avant-garde", *Fabrications*, 15:1, 55-69, DOI: 10.1080/10331867.2005.10525203
[54] Charles Jencks, *What is Post-Modernism?* 4th ed., (London: Academy: 1996) Title Page. To hear Jencks claim the coining of the term "Post-Modernism" in architecture, see also: Charles Jencks interviewed for *The Architectural* Review, "Charles Jencks on the Biennale", published July 2, 2014, accessed 5 January, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WellTQ4-w9o
[55] Unknown, "Michael Graves, Architect - Obituary", *The Telegraph*, 2015

the purely aesthetic discipline of Modernism[56]. He also actively looked "to history and ornament as sources of inspiration"[57], rather than designing despite them, as a Modernist might.

During the period that he taught Kuhne at Princeton, Graves provided Postmodernism with its first major monument in his Portland Building in Oregon, a 15-storey office block completed in 1983. It represented an abrupt change and tangential maneuver away from Modernism with its bright colours, integrated figurative statue, and classically-inspired cartoonish façade. Though it admittedly has not aged well in some respects (needing of a $95 million renovation in 2014[58]) it is to Postmodernism "just as the Bauhaus was [to] Modernism, because with all its faults it still is the first to show that one can build with art, ornament, and symbolism on a grand scale, and in a language the inhabitants understand."[59]

Figure 6: *The Portland Building*

Graves taught his students at Princeton, including Kuhne, to find their unique design voice like he had[60]. Kuhne was recruited by Graves as a young graduate[61], and would spend hours reading in the office library after work, finding his voice and honing his aptitude for architectural theory and discourse[62]. He held Graves in high regard

[56] Paul Goldberger, "Architecture View; A Little Book That Lead Five Men to Fame", *The New York Times*, 11 February, 1996, accessed 19 January, 2017. http://www.nytimes.com/1996/02/11/books/architecture-view-a-little-book-that-led-five-men-to-fame.html
[57] Unknown, "Michael Graves, Architect - Obituary", *The Telegraph*, 2015
[58] Anna Winston, *Postmodern Portland Building will be saved, says architect Michael Graves*, December 29, 2014, accessed January 26, 2017. https://www.dezeen.com/2014/12/29/iconic-postmodern-portland-building-saved-architect-michael-graves/
[59] Charles Jencks (quoted by Anna Winston), *Postmodern Portland Building will be saved, says architect Michael Graves*, December 29, 2014, accessed January 26, 2017. https://www.dezeen.com/2014/12/29/iconic-postmodern-portland-building-saved-architect-michael-graves/
[60] Laura Mark, "Obituary: Michael Graves (1934 – 2015)", *The Architects' Journal*, March 13, 2015, accessed January 19, 2017. https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/obituary-michael-graves-1934-2015/8679937.article
[61] Paul Cattermole, *Obituary of Eric Kuhne*, 2016
[62] Paul Cattermole, *Obituary of Eric Kuhne*, 2016

as one who helped him lay the foundations of his own design philosophy. Well-into his professional success, Kuhne shared the following:

> "Graves rescued architecture for the current generation. He restored historical precedent, colour, quality in making rooms and art as the principal aspect in architecture. He was a fantastic person to work for and I owe him a great deal."[63]

Kuhne's relationship with Graves clearly meant a great deal to him on his path to Bluewater.

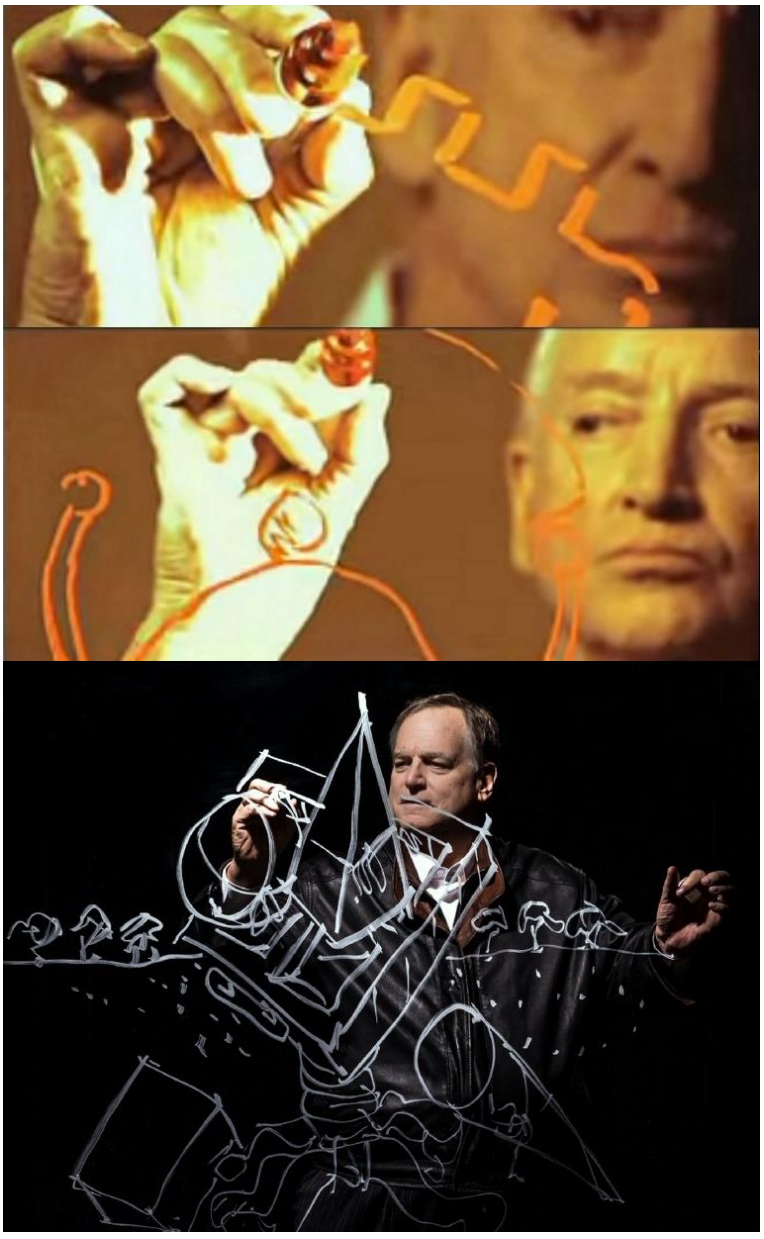

Figure 7: *Michael Graves (top) and his student/employee Eric Kuhne (bottom) in the act of drawing.*

[63] Eric Kuhne in an interview with *Design Week*, "Bluewater Runs Deep", 1998

III: Kuhne's Early Career

An important part of Kuhne's journey to Bluewater was the founding his own architecture practice in 1981 while still a student at Princeton[64]. He worked with several Postmodernist architects"[65] for a time, mostly in New York and Indiana[66], and there is also evidence to suggest that he became a well-known staple on the university lecturing circuit[67], but working under other architects, Kuhne felt "like a square peg in a round hole. Eric was only ever going to run his own show"[68], so he started to work more for himself.

Kuhne's practice CivicArts is credited with three projects before Bluewater:

1. Headwaters Park, Indiana, USA (1990)
2. Darling Park, Sydney, Australia (1991)
3. Cockle Bay Wharf, Sydney, Australia (1995)[69]

There is evidence to suggest that these three projects helped Kuhne further develop his architectural style and hone his professional approach on his path to Bluewater – both of which would be evidenced in the Bluewater project.

Firstly, Headwaters Park (the largest American inner city park built in the 20th Century[70]), in which Kuhne's employment of folly – both architectural and literary – is evident. Architectural follies - or structures which are more or less useless but give pleasure by their eccentricity[71] - are dotted about the park and intended to delight. The bowl-shaped folly shoots out a fine, cool mist during the warm months (Figure 8), and provides little shelter from the elements. Kuhne went on to use other playful follies at Bluewater – a lipstick-shaped

Figure 8

Figure 9

Figure 10

64 Paul Cattermole, *Obituary of Eric Kuhne*, 2016
65 John Holden in an interview with the author, October 2016
66 Paul Cattermole, *Obituary of Eric Kuhne*, 2016
67 Paul Cattermole, *Obituary of Eric Kuhne*, 2016
68 John Holden in an interview with the author, October 2016
69 "Projects by Current", *CivicArts* website, accessed October 6, 2016. http://www.civicarts.com/projects-by-current
70 Jeremy Myerson, *Design Week*, "Bluewater Runs Deep", 1998
71 James Stevens Curl and Susan Wilson, *The Oxford Dictionary of Architecture (3 ed.)*, "folly", (London: Oxford University Press, 2015), accessed January 30, 2017. http://www.oxfordreference.com.chain.kent.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780199674985.001.0001/acref-9780199674985-e-1859?rskey=BkaXjr&result=2

structure in the food court, rusticated archways at the road entrance, a colourfully lit cone and a cuboid on the roof of the West Village, and more bowl-shaped features atop car park stairways – all to imbue the scheme with a sense of luxury and playfulness (Figures 9-12).

Figure 11

Figure 12

Kuhne's literary folly for Headwater Park took the form of a poem: "Headwaters Park – Promised Land" (see Addendum C). Printed onto the scheme's masterplan, it is a short, whimsical and romantic description of the park which invokes the heritage of the place and attempts to inspire unity and wonder. Kuhne was once again moved to poetry when he came to design Bluewater, penning "Spirit of Bluewater" in 1996:

> "White chalk cliffs and water blue
> Surround a crystal city new:
> Parks beneath a blossom's shade,
> Stately stores end treed parades;
>
> "Pinnacle roofs tease a turning sky
> Where welcome halls greet a pilgrim's life
> and host a market's pageantry.
> Handkerchief domes float atop displays,
>
> "Fresh with air through grand arcades.
> Water circuses perform a nightly fayre
> For wintergarden and town square
> Where criers echo cross this land:
>
> "Build this dream with forthright hands
> and hearts that beat with industry."[72]

These literary follies (though unusual devices for an architect, and of arguably limited merit) outlined Kuhne's romantic visions for the respective schemes, and worked in concert with his drawing and communication skills to convey a multi-platform proposal into the minds of stake-holders. Writing the first poem for Headwater Park arguably prepared him to write the second for Bluewater, thus helping him on his path there.

Secondly and thirdly, Darling Park and Cockle Bay Wharf in Sydney. These could be considered sister-projects as they were designed and built within a few years and yards of each other. They have been referred to as the result of Kuhne's ideas "incubated down under"[73], suggesting a truly embryonic stage in Kuhne's journey to

[72] Quoted by Jocelyn Wenk, *Q&A with Architect Eric R. Kuhne about Bluewater Mall Parking and Landscaping*, accessed October 3, 2016. http://buildabetterburb.org/qa-with-architect-eric-r-kuhne-about-bluewater-mall-parking-and-landscaping/
[73] Paul Cattermole, *Obituary of Eric Kuhne*, 2016

Bluewater. As was hinted to earlier, Kuhne's employment "down under" started with one of his lectures. He was in Australia visiting his sister when invited to speak at Sydney University. In the audience was sat a director of the Lend Lease Corporation[74] – property developers of Darling Park (and later Cockle Bay Wharf and Bluewater). The corporation had been scratching their heads over the design of Darling Park for a while and hadn't been able to "crack it"[75]. It was a difficult waterfront site with views to the water obstructed by a highway. Kuhne's lecture entitled "Civic vs Public"[76] convinced this director to introduce Kuhne to Lend Lease chairman, Stuart Hornery. The two became acquainted, and Kuhne was subsequently hired by Lend Lease, first to design Darling Park, then Cockle Bay Wharf.

Whereas the brief for Headwater Park was mostly landscaping, a higher proportion of Darling Park was dedicated to interiors, with the brief covering the entire ground-plane of the site which was located at the foot of three towers. As at Headwater, Kuhne again invoked a sense of wonder and the heritage of the place in his design, with "six continental rooms, representing the six continents from which people emigrated to Australia... connected by a geometry of paths and flower parterres of exotic Australian flora"[77]. This same sentimentality and arrangement of regional plants would be employed in Kuhne's subsequent designs for Bluewater. The wall-space above the shops in the Guildhall (one of Bluewater's three malls) is lined on both sides with 106 sculptures[78] "representing each of the old medieval guilds of craftsmen"[79], and the landscaping and car parks were be planted with pear, apple and cheery tress to invoke Kent's identity as "one of the highest fruit-producing counties of the UK"[80].

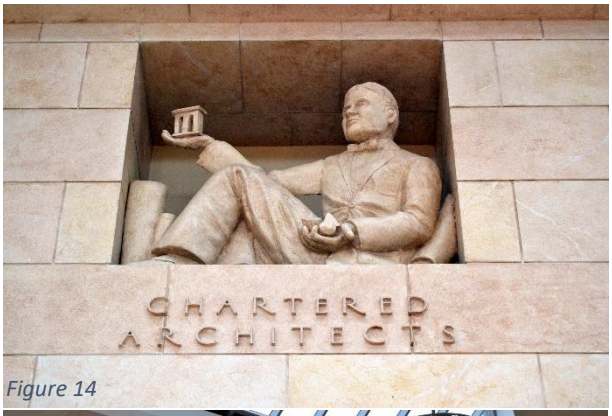

Figure 14

Figure 13: *Guildhall sculptures*

Kuhne also designed his first "Great Room" at Darling Park: the Star Court. The celestial domed ceiling is dotted with constellations and "ringed by carved plaster friezes of Australia's founding story"[81] (similar to Bluewater's Guildhall sculptures). He would design another three "Great Rooms" at each corner of Bluewater's triangular plan – another Star Court, along with a Moon Court and a Sun Court[82] – all three equally lavish with large domes and intricate limestone[83] tiled floor designs.

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74 Paul Cattermole, *Obituary of Eric Kuhne*, 2016
75 John Holden in an interview with the author, October 2016
76 Paul Cattermole, *Obituary of Eric Kuhne*, 2016. See also John Holden in an interview with the author, October 2016
77 "Darling Park, Sydney - Australia", CivicArts Eric R Kuhne & Associates, accessed September 24, 2016. http://www.civicarts.com/darling-park
78 Michael Evamy, *Bluewater: Vision to Reality*, 1999, 72
79 Unkown, *Design Week*, "The Big Blue", published February 12, 1999 12:00 am, accessed January 31, 2017. https://www.designweek.co.uk/issues/11-february-1999/the-big-blue/
80 Eric Kuhne in an interview with Jocelyn Wenk, *Q&A with Architect Eric R. Kuhne about Bluewater Mall Parking and Landscaping*, accessed October 3, 2016. http://buildabetterburb.org/qa-with-architect-eric-r-kuhne-about-bluewater-mall-parking-and-landscaping/
81 Paul Cattermole, *Obituary of Eric Kuhne*, 2016
82 Michael Evamy, *Bluewater: Vision to Reality*, (1999), 67, 137, 165, 197
83 Unkown, Design Week, "The Big Blue", 1999

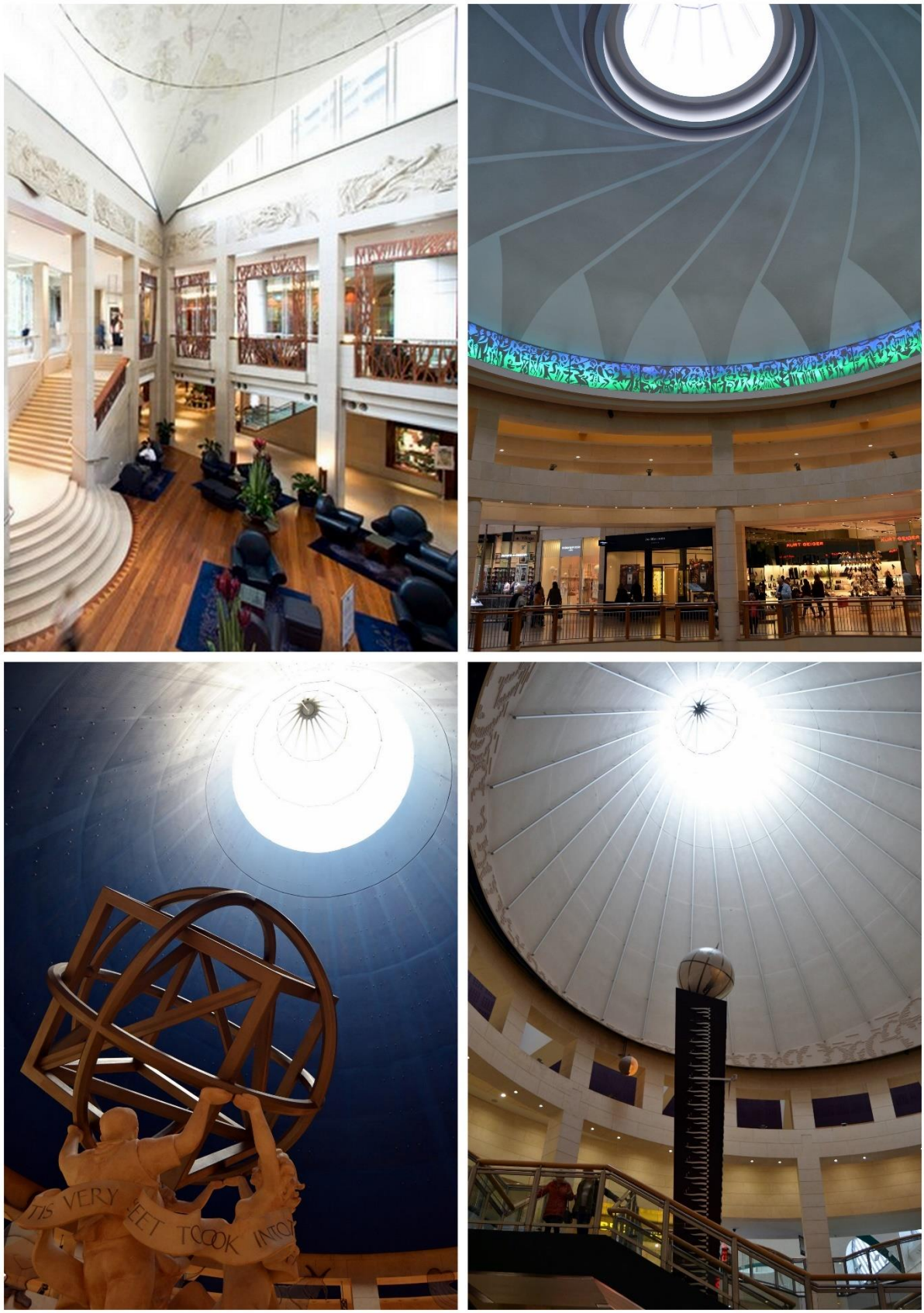

Figure 15: *Comparison: Darling Park's Star Court (top-right) and Bluewater's Sun, Moon and Star Courts.*

Cockle Bay Wharf was Kuhne's next project, located on the waterfront across the bridged highway from Darling Park. According to a friend and colleague, Kuhne loved everything that happened around water[84]. His architecture at Cockle Bay – a very successful complex of playfully formed bayside restaurants with a cobbled promenade – acts as the medium between land and sea, and attests to his skill of designing with and around bodies of water. He would employ these same skills when designing the plan of Bluewater, the untouched site of which was found with a selection of small lakes that were strategically relocated and integrated in the final shopping centre design[85].

It has been said by a friend of Kuhne that his work with Stuart Hornery on the above two projects in Sydney represent his quintessence:

> "Darling Park and Cockle Bay Wharf is a quintessential Eric Project. If I were to point at any project that Eric ever did and say where is his real soul, that project has got his real soul wrapped around it."[86]

Having found his soul, his style and Stuart Hornery, Eric was sent by Lend Lease on a trip to England to look at an old, disused chalk quarry in the North-West of Kent[87]. His path to Bluewater had ended, and his path through it had begun.

Figure 16: *Cockle Bay Wharf – "a quintessentially Eric project" according to a close friend of Eric Kuhne.*

[84] John Holden in an interview with the author, October 2016
[85] Michael Evamy, *Bluewater: Vision to Reality*, 1999, 21
[86] John Holden in an interview with the author, October 2016
[87] John Holden in an interview with the author, October 2016

In the spirit of Kuhne's aforementioned "literary follies", and in an effort to bridge Chapters One and Two, the author was moved to write the following poem which outlines the journey of some figurative raindrops through the life of Eric Kuhne up until the day he visits the site of Bluewater for the first time:

Bluewater Finds Eric Kuhne – A Sonnet

Writhing silently in the light above
The mist cools and swells into droplets fine.
Slowly they sink like feathers of a dove
Away, from the distant sun and her shine.

Spiralling downward together towards
Rusty wings and blankets and sandwiches,
Then up to the green North-East – with awards
And leather-bound historical riches.

Falling faster now, ever closer to
The earth the droplets go, t'ward the Red Isle
For a while, then north – now with cyan hue –
Fall into a white scar wide as a mile.

Drops of Blue Water christen his crown there;
The bespectacled, foreordained Man-Bear.

Figure 17: Arial photo of the Bluewater site/context (circled) South of the Thames before construction began in 1994.

Chapter Two

Eric Kuhne's Path ~~To and~~ Through Bluewater

Figure 18: Bluewater Park in 1994. View to the South-East.

Kuhne arrived at what was then known as "Bluewater Park[Σ]" (an old quarry in Greenhithe, Kent) in the wake of other visits by Stuart Hornery and Lend Lease executives[1] who were considering buying the site to build a shopping centre. Kuhne got out of the car, took a look around, then called up Hornery and told him "You can't write a cheque fast enough for this property"[2].

On June 25th 1994 Lend Lease acquired the land, and over the next five years would invest £375 million in developing it. An army of 5,000 workers would labour daily to level the site and relocate its lakes using 3 million cubic feet of Thanet sand. They would then drive 16,572 concrete piles 20 metres into the ground to support 15,000 tonnes of structural steel, then the floors of the resultant 50-acre building would be laid with 26,000 square-metres of German limestone[3] – and all under the creative direction of Eric Kuhne.

His beliefs, methods and approach to design will here be explored in order to understand exactly how he navigated such a colossal undertaking on his path *through* Bluewater.

[Σ] The name was an amalgam of the names of its then owners: *Blue Circle* and *Shearwater* – "Bluewater" for short. See Michael Evamy, *Bluewater: Vision to Reality*, 24

[1] Michael Evamy, *Bluewater: Vision to Reality*, 24

[2] John Holden in an interview with the author, October 2016

[3] Michael Evamy, *Bluewater: Vision to Reality*, 34, 49

I: Kuhne's Beliefs

Kuhne's beliefs about retail and architecture were borne of intense study and research – indeed his firm CivicArts officially calls itself "a *research* and design practice"[4]. His knowledge of architectural history was particularly remarkable, and he had the ability to draw diagrams and plans of Paris, Rome and other great European cities from memory. A colleague and witness shared:

> "He would sit there [drawing] and say: 'Here are the seven hills of Rome, and here's why the Forum worked as a place to sell stuff'. Eric had studied his art for a thousand years, and he knew why spaces worked and why spaces did not work."[5]

This suggests that Kuhne – like his Postmodernist mentor Michael Graves – believed that history had something to teach architects on their path through a 20th century project like Bluewater.

A major tenet of Kuhne's beliefs is what he referred to as "The Marketplace of Ideas"[λ]. This umbrella-term encapsulates multiple theories he had acquired through study and practice, and about which he was passionately evangelical. He was convinced that "retail is what breathes life into streets, towns and city centres", and that shopping was part of what he called "the heroic routine of everyday life". He also believed that the *context* of shops is as important as their *content* (Figure 19), and that "the shopping-centre industry must think about the holistic experience of [its] customers instead of just the transaction"[6]. Put simply and into the context of Bluewater, these statements suggest that Kuhne believed retail to be the key to civic life; that the everyday man or woman shopping at Bluewater should be celebrated by the architecture that surrounds them; that the spaces within and without Bluewater's shops should be as important as each other, and that the design of Bluewater should focus on the entire experience of its users – not just the money. Put simpler still, Kuhne believed Bluewater should be a lively, beautiful place for the everyday hero which prioritises customers over cash.

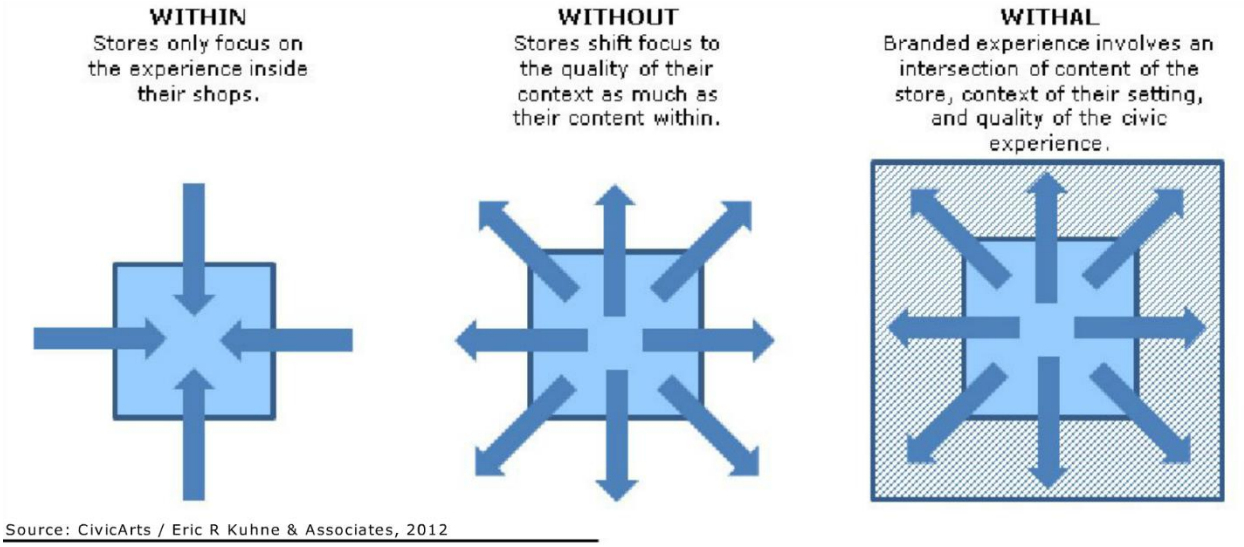
WITHIN
Stores only focus on the experience inside their shops.
WITHOUT
Stores shift focus to the quality of their context as much as their content within.
WITHAL
Branded experience involves an intersection of content of the store, context of their setting, and quality of the civic experience.
Source: CivicArts / Eric R Kuhne & Associates, 2012

Figure 19: Eric Kuhne believed that shopping centre design is about holistic experience, and that content is as important as context.

[4] "About", *CivicArts*, (emphasis added), accessed February 2, 2017. http://www.civicarts.com/about
[5] John Holden in an interview with the author, October 2016
[λ] It is unclear whether or not Kuhne had settled on this term by the time he worked on Bluewater, but the constituent theories that this tenet it espouses are certainly evident in Bluewater's design.
[6] Eric Robert Kuhne, "The Marketplace of Ideas", *Retail Property Insights* (Vol. 20, No. 1), (2013): 39-43. (Emphasis added)

The Bluewater project bowed to these beliefs. Though costs were monitored closely, Bluewater was deemed "not about cost". The focus was on *value* – a fundamental difference[7]. If an increase in cost meant an increase in value according to Kuhne's belief system, it was always considered[8]. Also throughout the project, Bluewater visitors were radically referred to as guests, not customers[9] - another fundamental difference. Parking was, and would always be free for Bluewater guests[10], and they were to be honoured during their stay by Kuhne and his team's built environment: well-constructed, thoughtfully-composed, and intricately-designed concrete, glass and steel. In the words of Kuhne, and echoing his sentiments about honouring people and cultures in Chapter One: "To honour the individual while shopping is the best of what the industry can accomplish"[11].

It is arguably as important to know Kuhne's *dis*beliefs as it is to know his beliefs, and one of the main things that Kuhne did *not* believe is that technology posed any threat to physical shopping centres. In the same way that retailers today feel threatened by technological competition from online shopping, retailers at the time of Bluewater's construction felt threatened by so-called teleshopping[δ]. One could shop from afar using satellite television channels like QVC – which to some represented "a prelude to a fully electronic shopping system that will not require [anybody] to leave home"[12]. Kuhne believed that nothing could be further from the truth, and that physical retail real estate (a shopping centre like Bluewater) is ideally positioned to *benefit* from the digital age of shopping, and could positively transform the development, design and operation of "marketplaces"[13]. Emboldened by this belief, the Bluewater project went ahead despite others' fears/theories about the future.

II: Kuhne's Methods

Some of Kuhne's methods on his path through the Bluewater project were rather unorthodox. To fully understand them, one must first understand his unique relationship with Lend Lease Chairman, Stuart Hornery.

The pair had enjoyed great success together from their two projects in Australia, and there is evidence to suggest that they shared a mutual affection and assisted in one another's professional aspirations. Generally speaking, Hornery more or less let Kuhne design what he wanted, and Kuhne provided the outstandingly successful schemes that Horney wanted. It has been said of their relationship that it "was the perfect architect meets the perfect client"[14]. One witness even called the relationship "Medici-like"[15] – a reference to the Medici family of wealthy socialites who ruled Florence and Tuscany from the 15th to the 18th century, and whose patronage funded the creative whims of the Renaissance-geniuses of the day like Brunelleschi, Michelozzo and

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7 Michael Evamy, *Bluewater: Vision to Reality*, 43
8 Michael Evamy, *Bluewater: Vision to Reality*, 43
9 Michael Evamy, *Bluewater: Vision to Reality*, 73
10 John Holden in an interview with the author, October 2016
11 Eric Robert Kuhne, "The Marketplace of Ideas", 39-43
δ The prefix *tele* is Greek meaning "from afar". *Tele-shopping* therefore means "shopping from afar". See Michael Quinion, *Affixes: The Building Blocks of English*, "tele-", accessed February 3, 2017. http://www.affixes.org/t/tele-.html
12 Brian Appleyard, "Shopping around for salvation: The new religion is consumerism and massive malls are its cathedrals. Let us bow our heads and pay", *Independent*, November 3, 1993, accessed January 20, 2017. http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/shopping-around-for-salvation-the-new-religion-is-consumerism-and-massive-malls-are-its-cathedrals-1501792.html
13 Eric Robert Kuhne, "The Marketplace of Ideas", 39
14 John Holden in an interview with the author, October 2016
15 John Burrows in an interview with the author, November 2016

Michelangelo[16]. That said, Kuhne did not enjoy *carte blanche* at Bluewater. As is the case in most business ventures, a lot of important things happen in boardrooms, and this was indeed the case for Kuhne. He was, for instance, part of a committee called the Project Control Group[17] (PGC) whose joint responsibility it was meet and make major decisions together about Bluewater's design and construction. First-hand accounts suggest that he and his methods were certainly a formidable force in the boardroom, and that he would often get what he wanted. There are a few possible reasons for this:

- Firstly, Kuhne's physical size and giant, bear-like[18] presence would have meant that he occupied a large space at the boardroom table – perhaps bigger than any other PCG member. Some have speculated that he weighed about three-hundred pounds at the time – the result of many fast-food lunches and cans of soda according to one with whom he dined regularly[19]. His presence was perceived has warm by some[20], but may have had a daunting psychological effect upon the rest of the committee, which Kuhne may have capitalised upon as a method to assert himself and his ideas for Bluewater.
- Secondly, Kuhne's vast intelligence (or genius, according to some[21]) meant that he reportedly thought twice as quickly as anyone else[22]. As has been sufficiently touched upon, he knew his history, he knew his craft and he had answers. The combination of his great physical *and* intellectual stature would have undoubtedly been an asset in the boardroom which he may have used as a method to assert his vision for Bluewater upon the group.
- Lastly, his employment of bold theatrics. This method is best illustrated by a startling episode involving Kuhne, some Lend Lease executives and John Burrows (a partner in one of many design consultancies hired by Kuhne during the Bluewater project): They were all in the throes of designing what would become the Water Circus at the South of the quarry. Burrows and his team had come up with an idea which had left Kuhne incredulous – he hated it, curtly deemed it entirely inappropriate, then moved the meeting along. The Lend Lease executives actually quite liked Burrows' idea, and asked him afterwards to stand up to Kuhne and champion it once more at the next meeting. A week passed and the same group assembled. Conversation got around to the Water Circus and Burrows re-presented the idea in the hope that this time Kuhne would see its potential. Rather than listening any longer or engaging with them in a debate, Kuhne wordlessly swivelled himself around in his chair and silently looked out of the window with his back to all of them! Further to this act of theatrical protest, when the baffled group tried to reason with him and continue their presentation, Kuhne stood up, walked away from the window and out of the door![23]

  It is unclear whether this last episode was an entirely characteristic snapshot of "boardroom-Kuhne" as few (if any) other accounts of him in the boardroom exist – but it is certainly the case that Kuhne had a *penchant* for bold theatrics and staging in other formal settings – like his lectures and his workspace –

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16 Ian Chilvers, *The Oxford Dictionary of Art and Artists (5 ed.), "Medici",* Oxford Reference, accessed January 25, 2017. http://www.oxfordreference.com.chain.kent.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780191782763.001.0001/acref-9780191782763-e-1583?rskey=730ujy&result=2

17 Michael Evamy, *Bluewater: Vision to Reality*, 40, 62

18 Jeremy Myserson, *Design: Mall is Beautiful*, *Independent*, November 15, 1998, accessed November 15, 2016. See also: Jeremy Myerson, "Bluewater Runs Deep", *Design Week*, 1998.

19 John Burrows in an interview with the author, November 2016

20 Paul Cattermole, *Obituary of Eric Kuhne*, 2016

21 Allison Lee, "Breathing life into public spaces", *City and Country*, September 24, 2007, accessed February 4, 2017. http://212-113-150-18.static.directrouter.co.uk/news.php?news_id=74

22 John Burrows in an interview with the author, November 2016

23 John Burrows in an interview with the author, November 2016

so why not the boardroom? During lectures, he would often draw live on-stage and theatrically project the process onto a large screen behind him. He also once gave a high-concept theatrical lecture about the Great Fire of London whilst simultaneously channelling the spirit of its diarist Samuel Pepys sat writing and drawing behind a desk[24]. And at his workspace, the CivicArts offices in London, guests would be welcomed by walls lined with "leather books, model boats, antique clocks, globes and rocking horses" – props, essentially, on what Kuhne himself called "a stage set... [which] gets clients talking"[25]. All of these things suggest that he knew the power of bold theatrics, and was able to wield them as a method to get what he wanted – whether that was to convey a message in a lecture, open dialogue with a client, or close dialogue with somebody he disagreed with.

Kuhne's relationship with Hornery may have been key with respect to his methods during the Bluewater project. The security and confidence afforded by his close friendship with and professional patronage of Hornery arguably emboldened Kuhne to act radically, take control and execute his own vision for Bluewater.

Figure 20: *Kuhne (left) and Hornery (far right).*

[24] John Burrows in an interview with the author, November 2016
[25] Jeremy Myerson, "Bluewater Runs Deep", *Design Week*, 1998.

III: Kuhne's Approach to Design

Kuhne's approach to the architectural design of Bluewater could be categorised under four main headings: 1) rigorous logic, 2) contextual awareness 3) market research, and 4) confident curation. Each will be explored in this section.

1) **Rigorous Logic**

This point is best expressed by Bluewater's plan design – reportedly the result of lively debates and inter-disciplinary discussions[26] – early drawings of which were done by Kuhne[27]. Put simply, three separate malls over two levels arranged in a triangular-shaped circuit with three large "anchor-stores"[28] at each node, and several "breakout zones"[29] along the way which lead to the orbiting leisure, dining and parking areas.

The logical purpose of having three separate malls was to attract three main target groups (identified through the market research mentioned later) to the complex. They were coined the "Club Executives", "County Classics" and "Young Fashionables", and they represented the high-, medium- and low-spending guests respectively[30] – a logical approach which reflects the historically strong economic class system in the UK[31]. Each mall was dedicated to a target group – the Guildhall for the Club Executives, the Rose Walk for the County Classics, and the Thames Walk for the Young Fashionables[32]. This would theoretically attract a high volume of people from diverse Socio-Economic backgrounds, and the circuit-designed layout of Bluewater would lubricate the movement of the many guests around the facility and keep them there like a casino[33].

If at any point a guest needed a break from what Kuhne called "the sausage-grinder of retail"[34], they could retire to one of the strategically-placed break-out zones for a coffee and a sit-down. After regaining their bearings, they would hopefully remember that "Oh yes, I did need to buy that thing for my mum…" – then stay in the centre for another 45 minutes – by which time the kids would be hungry so they would grab some food, etc.[35] – the process could go on and on. This was Kuhne's logical and calculated aim – to extend your stay, to extend your pleasure[36] and increase your spend. Bluewater proved to be quite a machine for this kind of retail, virtually printing money for the Lend Lease corporation for years after its completion[37].

In the context of the arguably less-successful schematic plans of other major UK shopping Centres, Bluewater's stands positively resolute – a masterful, shapely and outstretched essay in symmetry, geometry and rigorous logic.

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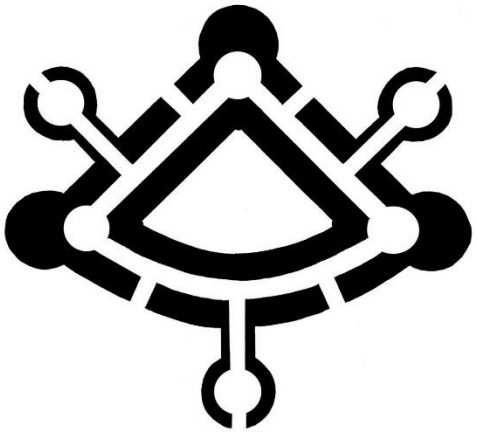
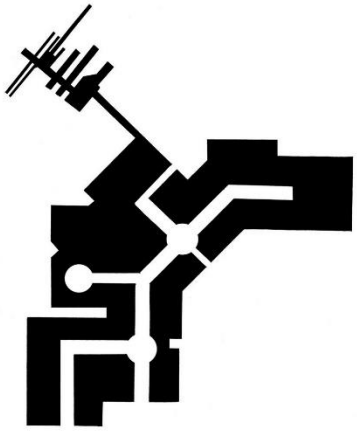
26 Michael Evamy, *Bluewater: Vision to Reality*, 40-2
27 Michael Evamy, *Bluewater: Vision to Reality*, 42
28 John Burrows in an interview with the author, November 2016, see also: John Holden in an interview with the author, October 2016. See also: Michael Evamy, *Bluewater: Vision to Reality*, 41-2
29 John Holden in an interview with the author, October 2016
30 Michael Evamy, *Bluewater: Vision to Reality*, 62
31 David Robson, "How Important is Social Class in Britain Today?", BBC Future, April 7, 2016, accessed Febrary 5, 2017. http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20160406-how-much-does-social-class-matter-in-britain-today
32 Michael Evamy, *Bluewater: Vision to Reality*, 60-2
33 John Holden in an interview with the author, October 2016
34 John Holden in an interview with the author, October 2016
35 John Holden in an interview with the author, October 2016
36 John Holden in an interview with the author, October 2016
37 John Holden in an interview with the author, October 2016

Figure 21: *Conceptual-Schematic plan diagrams of major UK shopping centres (continued overleaf).*

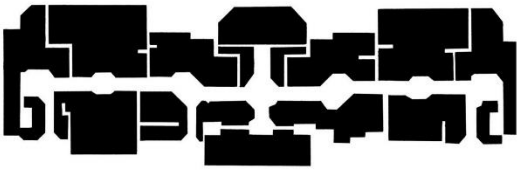
Westfield Stratford City
175,000 m²



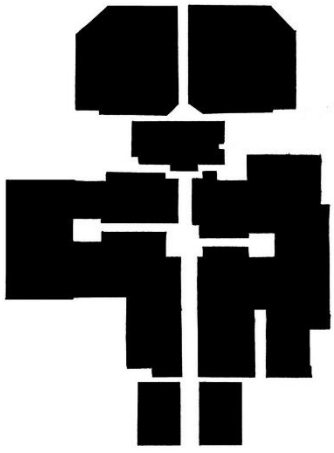
Bluewater, Kent
155,700 m²



Meadowhall, Sheffield
139,355 m²



Lakeside, Essex
133,780 m²



Brent Cross, Hendon
82,800 m²

The Glades, Bromley
43,100 m²

2) **Contextual Awareness**

Kuhne wanted Bluewater's architectural identity to draw deeply on its cultural context and physical location. In his pursuit to honour the British culture in which Bluewater was to be built, he became thoroughly familiar with the built environments of London and the South-East, then compiled a list of "the best of British" upon which he would model some of Bluewater's civic spaces. It included Kentish Oast Houses (the distinctive roofs of which would inspire Bluewater's many Oast House roofs), Sir John Soane's handkerchief-domed Breakfast Room (which would be echoed in Bluewater's many Handkerchief-domed upper malls), Decimus Burton's Palm House at Kew (which would directly influence the form of Bluewater's glazed Wintergarden), and Covent Garden market (which would influence the design of an interstitial breakout space lined with boutique shops near Bluewater's West Village)[38] (Figure 22).

Bluewater's physical context within a chalk quarry near the Thames was also reflected in Kuhne's design. The exterior was rendered with a white "chiselled from chalk"[39] look to give the notional impression that it was a modern archaeological dig which had revealed a lost garden estate[40], and the interior flooring of the Lower Thames Walk was paved in the shape of the Thames (Figure 23).

3) **Market Research**

In order to look into the heart and soul of Bluewater guests and understand what drives them[41], Kuhne embraced the practice of psychographic profiling in his design approach: face-to-face meetings/surveys with members of the public undertaken by a specialist consultancy[42]. In this case it was to identify exactly what things bothered consumers in shopping centres of the day in order to avoid them in Bluewater's design. This lead to a host of design innovations developed purely to offer psychological support to customers to encourage them to stay longer and come back often – for instance: shiny stone floors were avoided because they were perceived as slippery; fretting parents worried that their children might fall through railings on Bluewater's upper-levels lead to the installation of heavier, more sturdy-looking balustrades; and the unnerving sound of squealing tyres in the car parks was mitigated by adjusting the floor finish[43].

Kuhne arguably believed that psychographics were the key to giving the customer "everything they never knew they wanted"[44] out of Bluewater, and would wax lyrical about them for years afterwards[45].

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38 Michael Evamy, *Bluewater: Vision to Reality*, 66
39 Michael Evamy, *Bluewater: Vision to Reality*, 43
40 Eric Kuhne quoted by Jocelyn Wenk, *Q&A with Architect Eric R. Kuhne about Bluewater Mall Parking and Landscaping*
41 Eric Robert Kuhne, "The Marketplace of Ideas", 39-43
42 Michael Evamy, *Bluewater: Vision to Reality*, 1999, 60
43 Michael Evamy, *Bluewater: Vision to Reality*, 1999, 73-4
44 Eric Robert Kuhne, "The Marketplace of Ideas", 39-43
45 John Holden in an interview with the author, October 2016

Figure 22: Kuhne's architectural inspirations (left column) and the resultant Bluewater architecture (right column).

Figure 23: *Thames Walk decorative floor tiling, Bluewater.*

4) **Confident Curation**
Kuhne approached the design of Bluewater as both its creator *and* curator – commissioning many works of civic, mechanical, typographical and figurative art to be dotted around the malls. Unlike the modernist "one-percent-for-art"[46] practice of apologetically placing solitary artworks at the entrances of plain buildings, Kuhne's approach was closer to "ninety-nine-percent-for-art", confidently placing artworks as cultural celebrations and way-finding landmarks throughout the centre, using every surface as a canvas – including the floor.

Kuhne's combination of these four things arguably encapsulates his overall approach to Bluewater's design and – along with his aforementioned methods and beliefs – constitutes his path through the Bluewater Project from start to finish.

Figure 24: *Selection of Bluewater's civic artworks.*

[46] Charles Jencks, *What is Post-Modernism?*, 22

Conclusion

As stated in the introduction:

> "It was the purpose of this paper is to examine the life and constitution of Eric Kuhne in the context of Bluewater. This is done to deduce the specific elements of Kuhne's pre- and mid-Bluewater life that afforded the project such success."

Having studied Kuhne's path to and through Bluewater, examined Bluewater itself, and heard from those who worked with him, it could be argued that one of the above-mention elements of success is that he explicitly understood the value of relationships – certainly mankind's relationship with the architecture and cultures of the past through cultural, historical and psychographic research[47] – but most especially *interpersonal relationships* of the present. His was a path to Bluewater was gilded with many great opportunities, and it could be argued that the key that unlocked many doors along the way was Kuhne's relational way of being. According to one close to Kuhne, he was so socially skilled that "he could sell sand to Arabs and snow to eskimos – and he did". This suggests that he knew the value of interpersonal relationships, and was highly skilled in creating them.

Another specific element of his success with Bluewater was his vision. His methods at Bluewater were always subservient to his development of and execution of a sound architectural vision[48]. Having visualised his vision as drawings, he then simply stayed true to it by defending it in the boardroom. If a person did not share his vision, Kuhne might literally and figuratively turn his back on the dissenter as he did to John Burrows [49] in order to protect the vision.

The last element of success could be argued to be his beliefs. He believed that technology was not a threat to "The Marketplace of Ideas", and believed in honouring the worlds diverse cultures, including that of Bluewater's native Kent. When he was designing Bluewater, it could be argued that he believed in so much more than bricks, mortar and money – that he was giving a gift to the 9 million future guests within Bluewater's one-hour catchment area[50]. He believed in the poetry of Bluewater's spaces[51], and honouring the everyday heroes who would occupy them. Kuhne's character was undergirded by his belief in warmth, generosity and "reciprocity of spirit", which was his creed[52].

A scheme like Bluewater may never be built again because of the current political climate[53], and as the memorial pictured stands as a monument to Bluewater (Figure 28), Bluewater stands as a monument to Eric Kuhne, who died less than a year before the completion of this paper on July 25th 2016.

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47 See page 28
48 See pages 25-7
49 See pages 23-4
50 Michael Evamy, *Bluewater: Vision to Reality*, 1999, 60
51 John Holden in an interview with the author, October 2016
52 Paul Cattermole, *Obituary of Eric Robert Kuhne*, 2016, accessed October 6, 2016
53 Michael Evamy, *Bluewater: Vision to Reality*, 1999, 26

Figure 25: Kuhne with Bluewater, his creation.

Figure 26

Figure 27

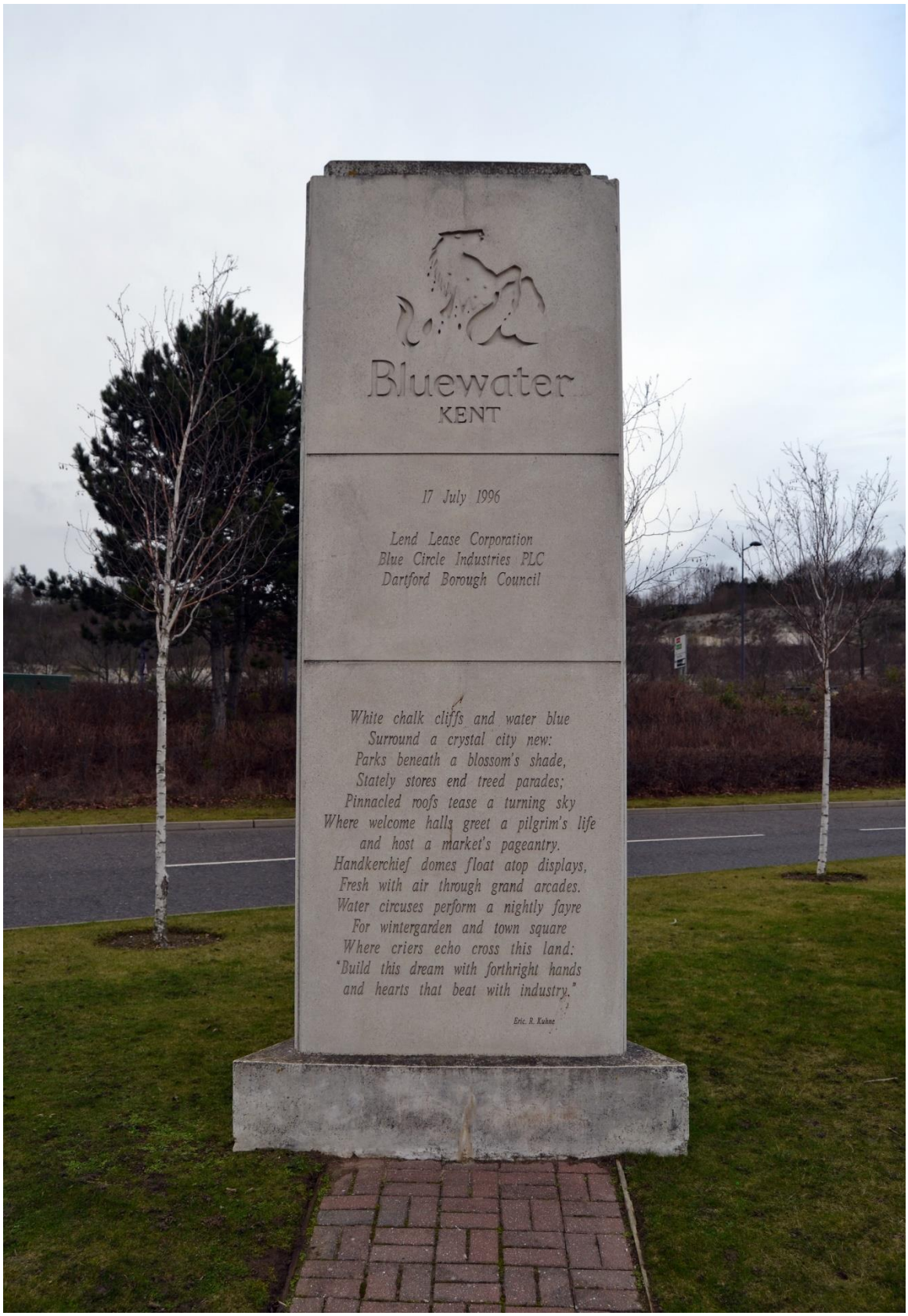
Bluewater
KENT
17 July 1996
Lend Lease Corporation
Blue Circle Industries PLC
Dartford Borough Council
White chalk cliffs and water blue
Surround a crystal city new:
Parks beneath a blossom's shade,
Stately stores end treed parades;
Pinnacled roofs tease a turning sky
Where welcome halls greet a pilgrim's life
and host a market's pageantry.
Handkerchief domes float atop displays,
Fresh with air through grand arcades.
Water circuses perform a nightly fayre
For wintergarden and town square
Where criers echo cross this land:
"Build this dream with forthright hands
and hearts that beat with industry."
Eric. R. Kuhne

Figure 28: Monument to Bluewater near West Village.

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9. **Bowl-shaped Folly at Bluewater** (photograph), by the author, (Feb 6 2017).
10. **Rusticated Archway Folly at Bluewater** (photograph), by the author, (Feb 6 2017).
11. **Wintergarden, Bluewater - exterior at night** (photograph) by the author, (Feb 6 2017).
12. **West Village, Bluewater – exterior at night** (photograph) by the author, (Feb 6 2017).
13. **Detail of Upper Guildhall sculptures, "Chartered Architect"** (photograph) by the author, (Feb 6 2017).
14. **Upper Guildhall sculptures**, (photograph) by the author, (Feb 6 2017)
15. **Photo Montage (by the author) consisting of (clockwise starting from top left):**
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16. **Cockle Bay Wharf** (photograph), CivicArts, accessed January 31, 2017. http://www.civicarts.com/cockle-bay?lightbox=dataItem-ikpnb9701
17. **Arial photograph of Bluewater and context** (detail) – by Moondance, taken from *Bluewater: Vision to Reality* by Michael Evamy (see References), page 20.
18. **Bluewater Park, 1994** (photograph, exposure adjusted), by Chorley Handford, taken from *Bluewater: Vision to Reality* by Michael Evamy (see References), page 21.

19. **Within, Without, Withal** (diagram), taken from Eric Robert Kuhne, "The Marketplace of Ideas", *Retail Property Insights* (Vol. 20, No. 1), (2013): 39-43.
20. **Eric Kuhne and Stuart Hornery** (photograph) by Adrian Brooks, taken from *Bluewater: Vision to Reality* by Michael Evamy (see References), page 65
21. **Conceptual Schematic Plans of Major UK Shopping Centres** (diagram), by the author.
22. **Bluewater Architectural Inspiration for Bluewater Civic Spaces (photo-montage)**, (listed from left to right, row by row):
    Sir John Soane's Breakfast Room (photograph), accessed February 6, 2017: https://www.apollo-magazine.com/content/uploads/2014/09/Soane.jpg
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23. **View of Lower Thames Walk** (photograph), by Jaap Oepkes, taken from *Bluewater: Vision to Reality* by Michael Evamy (see References), page 172
24. **Photo-Montage of Civic Artworks at Bluewater**, by the author (listed from left to right):
    Clock Tower (photograph) by the author, (Feb 6 2017).
    Rose Trellis Artwork (photograph) by the author, (Feb 6 2017).
    Dragon Artwork (photograph) by the author, (Feb 6 2017).
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Consent Form to Record Interview with Ben Warner (KSA BA Student Dissertation)

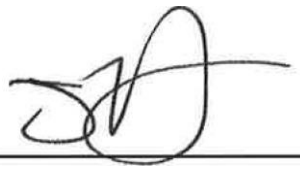
Consent for participant (adult) to be recorded + recordings archived and used for future research and teaching.

NB If the adult has a communication disorder, the content of this form must be presented to her/him in an accessible format.

By signing below, I hereby give my consent to:

- be audio-recorded for this project,
- have the recording transcribed and stored by the University of Kent, and Kent School of Architecture for the purpose of future research and teaching,
- have my words transcribed and published in a piece of academic writing.

Name of Participant (printed) JOHN HOWDEN.

Signature of Participant 

Date Signed 24.1.17.

Addendum A

Interview with John Holden

– Former Senior Design Director at CivicArts, Long-Term Friend and Colleague of Eric Kuhne

31/10/2016, 200 Degrees Café, Nottingham.

(Interviewer's questions are in bold script)

(ORIGINAL RECORDING AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST)

I'm very keen to know how it was to work with him, what sort of collaborator he was?

Eric was very unique – in the context of the UK, exceptionally unique. The way Eric worked was… he believed in civic destination, and he believed that the marketplace (that is, retail), and ideas – the marketplace of ideas is what he always used to talk about – that that's what made great cities. There was the economy, there were spaces that were generated by the economy, and then the sense that could be made out of those spaces. Eric never believed in architecture leading – which is sometimes kind of hard to believe when you look at the actual buildings – Bluewater with all of its embellishments, was not put there for the sake of making the retail work. It was all about creating a place around the retail to keep you in the retail longer – to put you at ease in the retail. Eric understood that the reason you have a successful city is that you have a successful marketplace in the city that makes people come to the city in the first instance, thus generating a successful economic core, which was always at the core of his philosophy – then he'd always say: "Then you wrap the architecture around that", then you can kind of go for it. That would be the way that Eric thought; you get the simple sciences right (the space, the visibility, the shops, levels of shopping, complimentary uses, scale of shops), then he'd come at it and say "Well now you have to make it great."

Eric would always point at projects like Rockefeller Centre in New York City and say "That's a great destination. There's great retail, wrapped around a great event, the magic of employees coming down on top of it." He would always look at the reasons for why a city is the way it is. It's hard to put it into a line, but Eric believed in "The Art of Place". "The Art of Architecture" kind of came secondary. When it did, you could call it post-modern – you could call it crazy – you could call it out of this world in some respects, but in a world where modernism had sanitized our cities, Eric was a bit of a breath of fresh air when it came to retailers in the early to mid-nineties looking for differentiation.

Eric used to give a talk called "Civic vs. Public", and he gave this talk in Australia invited by his [future] brother-in-law John Helm, in Sydney somewhere. In the audience was Stuart Hornery, who was the CEO of Lend Lease, and he was at the time doing a project in Darling Harbour that nobody could crack, and Stuart listened to this young architect talking about his ideas for civic place, and Stuart didn't go up to him afterwards, but asked him for his card and then invited him over to his office, and that was the friendship

born. They did Darling Park and Cockle Bay Wharf together, which is, I would say, more of a quintessential Eric Project – if I were to point at any project that Eric ever did and say where is his real soul, that project has got his real soul wrapped around it, because it's a restaurant destination on a waterfront. All Eric loved happened around water. Waterfronts, he believed, had the spirits of his desires? The spirit of his imaginations? Probably the most focused on waterfronts. Darling Park, Cockle Bay still to this day are still hugely successful projects – and off the back of that, Stuart had him come over to the UK, just to look at sites, tour and look at the UK context. They were just looking for projects. They travelled around just to look at places, came up here to look at Meadow Hall which had recently opened, down to Lakeside which had recently opened, then Stuart told him to go and look at an old chalk quarry in Kent that they were looking at buying. Eric drove into it, looked around it, phoned up Stuart and said "You can't write a cheque fast enough for this property", and that was kind of it, that springboard, Bluewater happed, opened its doors, printed money for Lend Lease Corporation until a couple of years ago when they sold it.

Stuart unfortunately died a couple of years ago as well. One thing that I would say is that for Stuart and Eric, is was the perfect architect meets the perfect client. Stuart could be a real arsehole – you kind of had to be that way. Stuart very much filled the board of Lend Lease with people who saw his vision, and when you look at Bluewater, you really see Stuart's vision and Eric's architecture really married.

As a format for retail, it reset the entire stage – it made Meadow Hall out of date – Lakeside became a bit of a joke really, and a lot of people still look at it and go "How could we make another Bluewater?" Unfortunately, there's not a lot of Super-Regional Shopping Centres that go on in the world, and Bluewater will always stand in the UK retail context as being a complete {world apart?]. You have Westfield coming in trying to do their White City – urban context, tough, too many restrictions – you go out to Stratford City, same situation. Now they're working down in Croydon, again, and urban situation – so you don't really get this Aircraft Carrier with motorway connections really anywhere in the UK, so as a project its really unique too. In the world there's a lot of them – mostly in the United States or Australia, places like Chapstone, again, the aircraft carrier shopping centre – whereas Bluewater has got a uniqueness to it that I think will probably carry it into the future ahead of a lot of other retail centres that probably will come and go. I think there will still be shopping in Bluewater well after the Westfields of this world have gone the way of the Dodo – I like to think that anyway. There are huge changes in retail these days because of (gestures to his smartphone), and in some respects, your dissertation is quite an interesting – coming at an interesting time to talk about retail – even though it's not really retail you're talking about, it feels like there needs to be a chapter in there about "Where is retail going?" because Eric very much changed the way we shopped. Bluewater opened and made everything redundant, and my point to you is that it's still making shopping centres redundant. Opening up these retail centres… What would be a good thing to look at would be looking at say Stratford city, because Stratford city is a triangle

as well, Bluewater is a triangle. The best way to describe Bluewater is that it's a casino for retail. I've shopped in Bluewater since the day it opened, I think I was there the day after it opened and I still don't know where John Lewis is. If you put me down one of those malls and say "Where is John Lewis?" I'll say [pointing] "That way", and I won't be wrong. If you look at Stratford City, which Eric actually master-planned as well, even though it went through two or three other owners until it was actually built by Westfield, the triangle that was drawn there was Eric's hand. The first thing he would always say about Stratford City is that they made one huge, fundamental mistake, and that was that they tried to put retail outside, and in his mind, that just doesn't work in the UK. If you ever asked Eric, what was the best retail environment, it would have been weather-protected, air-conditioned, perfect for retail – with civic pieces to it that you can break out into – but he would always go for that Bluewater Section with a lid on top, controlled environment, controlled lighting, as he always put it "…comfortable for ladies with their ankles exposed". He would always put himself in the world of the shopper when it came to retail, and then when it came to planning urban space, he would always put himself in the shoes of the citizen – the shopper who is using the city, and talk about it in that context.

Another specific thing that I have thought about is the idea of Eric as a Romantic – from these notional ideas, what I've read about him and even from he's drawings, he's got a very clear vision. What do you think of him as a romantic? Do you think of him as that?

I think Eric was too intellectual to be called romantic – I wouldn't use that word. As a friend I might use that word. I think Eric believed in gracefulness before romanticism, if that makes sense. He felt that grace transcended everything, so it was about poetic expression, less romantic expression.

Sentimentalism, maybe?

If you use the word romance or sentiment, it's almost too trivial. Eric believed in poetic expression and the poetry of the space – that's the best way I can describe it. You go to Bluewater and you see those sonnets and all the stuff he wrote. I think he liked to think of himself as a bit of a poet. He liked writing, but he liked writing certain things. He hated writing descriptively, he loved writing expressively, so he would try to express feelings in space using very specific wording. He wouldn't be romantic about it, he'd try to ground what he was designing with very specific words and terminologies that make you, the user more comfortable in the space. The words in Bluewater are more about anchoring the place in a mentality. You go to villages and towns of Kent, any of the UK's towns and you see poetry being written on the side of buildings. Eric was a believer in that. You go to Sheffield for instance to the site of Hallam University's big ugly block at the top of [name] Street, they write this thing on the side of the building. Eric would look at that and see the reason for that. I don't think he'd necessarily sit there and read the words and think "Oh, that's beautiful wording", he would sit there and say "That's fundamentally correct to bring a sense of belonging to people who are visiting, who are coming here to shop or

see a movie, or meet friends or visit family – he was someone who always felt that architecture always came second, that there was a space between the architecture and the individual encountering the architecture that needed to be described. He would always describe it using expressive architecture (pyramids and spheres and silly things), but then he's always tried to use words very carefully, and I think that if you were studying him it would be wrong to say that they were romantic notions. I think maybe there was a bit of slyness and romance, a bit of slyness to trick the people who don't pay attention into thinking "Oh, what wonderful poetry", whereas he was always trying to fool people into giving them a sense of security in the space: "Oh, well that's there. That gives me comfort at a scale, it's body and principle that I can relate to – therefore I'm more comfortable here, and I might go shop in River Island for about thirty minutes longer."

There was one thing Eric was always trying to do, which was prolong your stay, prolong your comfort. The average stay for Bluewater is something like five and a half hours? What other retail centre does that? Forum shops in Las Vegas maybe, but that's because your gambling there, and you're staying in a hotel. You have to appreciate that most shopping centres – even the new ones today – 2 hours? 2 and a half hours? There are so many people out there saying "How do we make another Bluewater?" Well that's really easy guys, start by not charging for parking. "Well, we can't do that. No, can't do that…" Well then Eric would have stood there and said "Well get the fuck out of my office then, because there's fundamental sciences here that will make your retail centre print money". That's what he would tell people: "You want it to print money? You do this, this, this and this, and to start with, no money for parking – free parking at all times"

It's hard from an asset managers point of view to not charge for parking because that's a very easy sum on a calculator. That was always the great thing about Stuart Hornery. Stuart Hornery would sit there and tell you "You're idiots if you charge for parking because my centres have people staying there three of four times the amount of time spending five times the amount of money, and you'll never make that out of parking – never – not even if there was a train station on top of it."

Eric would always fight a corner in the world which was hugely unique. He's the only person that I've ever met that will do it. Most of the time he was the minority voice, but because Bluewater was there as a testament, people kept turning up saying "We want Bluewater." Ok, well this is what you have to do. They'd leave going "Well what are we gonna do, we can't do that!"

To be critical for a minute, Eric's time was passing on a little. Now everybody wants Westfield. Regardless of longevity, there's a real tragedy in the demise of Eric. I think Westfields are very temporary – they're gonna come, they're gonna go, then people are gonna start looking around saying "Where's the soul of our cities? Where's the soul of retail?" And there won't be an Eric there to define it for them.

On top of the free parking, what are the other handful of factors that Eric identified as those money-printing properties of a building?

Sightlines, for a start.

Bluewater starts with not charging for parking, ease of parking, ease of access, capitalises on the fact that you're on top of a motorway junction, and that within five hours you've got 5 million people – so Bluewater really is an engine right down to its very fabric. If you walk around the malls and look at say the light levels in the malls, if you look at the amount of glass that's in each specific mall, look at the colour of the soffits, the reflection of light coming in, you'll find on the higher end, malls there a more diffuse ambient light. Go round to the family malls its quite a bit brighter. Kids malls its quite a bit brighter still, so right down to that level of design, they were thinking.

Sightlines as well. You look at any particular point on the ground, look up and you'll be able to see upper level retail, so the way-finding is quite relaxed. The malls are quite expansive too – I think they're 26 metres? 13 on the ground? However wide they are, that was the first time you had malls that wide, that well lit, with very clear sight lines. When it was initially designed too, there was none of this "let's put these stupid little kiosks in", so the malls were very clear. In fact, if you go to Bluewater and find a place where there is no kiosk, stand there and pay attention to what you can actually see from a given point. You can actually see an awful lot. There's very little in the way by way of architecture. Yeah sure, there's white poles and fancy railings and all of that stuff, but the sightlines and visibility is quite strong. If you look at the leisure spaces at the mid points of the malls too – so you break out into the Wintergarden, or you break out into the village, again you walk those little shops on your way to Byron or Pizza Express, that little run of shops is quite dark, it's quite intimate, you feel like you're passing through an interstitial space into something grander – and that's deliberate, that's about you moving from what Eric used to call "The Sausage Grinder of Retail" into something more subdued to make you relax. They put a book shop down there and you might relax, hang out, if you've got kids, the kids can fool around in the water outside and you can sit there, think about your life, think about all these wonderful things – and then you remember that you needed that present for your mum, so we'll go back and do more shopping, and you've just transformed your stay from two hours to possibly 3 hours or 4, simply because you're going to eat, you're going to fool around for maybe 45 minutes to an hour and a half, then go back shopping. Suddenly you're keeping people there for 5 hours – very very simple devices.

Also if you walk around the mall, when it was initially designed you couldn't walk more than sixty metres without a place to sit, and there would be a coffee shop there right next to you. It is still a bit like that. If you walk along and look at where Costa is and Starbucks is, you get the feeling that you're walking a 150-metre-long stretch and ever sixty-or-so metres you have a place to relax.

Another thing that you have to understand is that the structure of Bluewater is very cleverly divided up. It's 1.65 million square feet leasable. People will rarely shop any more than 300,000 square feet. If I was to sit there and tell you to shop 300,000 square feet you probably couldn't even define it, but there's no way you're going to visit 1.56 million square feet of shop in a day. You're going to be able to do 150,000 to 200,000 if that if you're a girl. If you're a bloke, you'll about 100,000 or less. The structure of it is made in such a way that you can actually shop with ease exactly the shops you want in that 5-6 hour timeframe. The way it was originally merchandised was to allow you as a group. They designed it on psychographics. Psychographic profiling deals with – well demographics, we all know what that is – Gen Y, Gen X, Gen Millennial, Gen whatever-the-hell – you know, buzzwords in the world of bollocks. The guys who did Bluewater sat down and actually worked out the psychology of the group – group psychology. If you really wanted to drill into something that was the core of Eric's belief system about how we use cities – psychographic profiling. He always used to talk about it, all the time – bore you senseless about it. I wouldn't say he was an expert, there are other people out there who are experts on this, but it's a really hard sell into the world of retail because its ephemeral – it's really hard to put your finger on something. Really the core of it is that… you're twenty-something. You're gonna go shopping with your girlfriend and your buddies, and you're going to be a group of people that as you go around the shopping centre, you're going to influence each other, a very specific dynamic. You might buy something in Superdry, and so might your girlfriend. You see her buying that thing and you might say "I think I'll have that", then your friend who is with you might say "There's another store over here that might do that, we could go there". The dynamic of that group as it shops the retail centre – it's not an exact science, but you can apply a science to it.

In these days of social media, we're actually coming closer to defining that, and the retailers are trying to define that as best they can, still falling back on the old generation demographics, but Eric realised that that stays true all the way to families. For example, I'll go shopping with my wife and my kids, my kids and my wife will have more to say about what I buy than anything else, and so fundamentally you have to realise that – that I'm not shopping for myself, Others are shopping for me, and if you can make those other people comfortable, I've got the wallet, then I'm happy. They're comfortable, I'm comfortable, we're all ok, I'll go shopping. That individual who is comfortable in that group will spend three times more than if they were there by themselves. If I was there by myself I might go buy some shoes. If I'm there with my family, there's probably a good shout that I'll buy shoes, I'll buy a suit, I'll buy a shirt, I'll buy cufflinks, I'll buy a watch, I'll buy the kids toys, I'll buy my wife a dress – it goes on and on and on, self-perpetuates, and Eric would always try to say "The vehicle we're building in that Bluewater Centre – be it through the spacing between cafes, the ability to shop that 200,000/300,000 square foot magic number, the ease of parking, types of department stores, types of anchors, the range between them – it's all plugged into the type of individual shopping there, and to this day, you go down to Bluewater and pay attention to what people are wearing – people go to

that fucking thing like they were going to church! You see how well dressed they are? People go down there and say "We're going to John Lewis. That's important. That's an event." It's a shopping centre, dammit. It's a shopping centre – look at it! It's a shopping centre!

When you go to Lakeside, do you get that? Lakeside wish they could generate that. Bluewater was pointed at a demographic, psychographic world that they knew existed in Kent and South London at the time.

There's another guy, David Beale, probably not worth trying to track him down, kind of a retard, he had a problem with other things… But David very much was a part of the whole targeting of Bluewater at its audience, and "the audience was just like a ripe fruit", is the way David describes it – they couldn't *but* be successful. They knew that if they put in Marks and Spencers, House of Fraser, John Lewis, and a few shops there, they knew there was nothing but for it was going to be successful – but the trick was that they made it more than successful, which is why now it still trades hugely, and a whole lot higher than anything else. Westfield can go to Croydon and do what they want to do, but I'll tell you now, it'll just be a bump in the road for Bluewater. I think Bluewater has got some more retail coming in, but I think that it is more of a knee-jerk – there is an expansion planned, I don't know if you know that?

No, I didn't. Is it in the next quarry across?

No, it's within the centre itself. We are actually doing it. The quarry across the road is going to be Eastern Quarry – different kettle of fish, residential all the way – high ho, god bless them.

When all of the dust has settled over the years I think people will point at Bluewater and say "Please, still give us that. Give us the magic that made Bluewater", and very often people won't have the guts to – asset managers sure as hell don't. It takes an enlightened client and a particularly well-spoken articulate architect-

Which Eric was famous for, from what I've read

Yeah, he could sell sand to Arabs and snow to eskimos – and he did!

What did he say most often? You mentioned "Make it great", "The Marketplace of Ideas" – what were his most frequent phrases and words?

He always used to refer to heroic routines – "The Heroic Routine of Everyday Life" – and if you were to call that the title of your dissertation you wouldn't be far off from wrong. That was very much an undying statement of a lot of what he always used to say – that there was a beauty in the ordinary, there is a beauty in what we do every day. There was no need to be sat there trying to make these beautiful emotions flow from architecture when the beautiful emotions already existed – you just had to frame them with something relevant that everybody got, and I think that is why he was always hugely critical of

modernism – if you said the word "modernism" to Eric, he would just spit blood at you. You could say "Tell me why you hate modernism–"

"With ease, how long have you got?", he might say.

Because obviously he was taught by modernists and functionalists, right?

He kind of was, but Eric was always a rebel at university. He worked with a number of post–modernists after university, and even there he was kind of a square peg in a round hole. Eric was only ever going to run his own show; it was only ever going to be Eric.

I think in later years he became much more mellow, but when he was a younger man, he really fought for his ideals. I think he tried to change the way he did things in his later years, but I think his health was failing him for a number of years up until he died actually. He always felt that architecture was an interface, and that was kind of it – it had to be friendly, it didn't have to be outspoken, it didn't have to rule the world, it just had to do its job well and contain the economy that made you and I encounter cities at an economic level. He would sit there and would say "Well what's sustainability? Sustainability ain't planting a tree. Sustainability ain't putting up a windmill, it sure as hell ain't putting up a solar panel". He would sit there and say "Look, sustainability and ecology and all that are hugely important, but it will be solved." He always believed that it will be solved by other people. What we have to guard about is that our cities don't become irrelevant, because if they become irrelevant to our everyday lives, then they're not sustainable in the whole, let alone the part. He would sit there and he would tell you "If the economy of cities fails, all else fails, so everything we do as architects and designers should be founded within the routine, what is important to us in our everyday lives – and today it happens to be retail, shopping and cities, whereas tomorrow it probably won't be because we'll be shopping on these [gestures to smartphone].

It's kind of a shame that he died when he did, because he was just starting to tackle reasons for the future of retail. He was always a big believer in John Lewis, for instance. I do a lot of work for John Lewis, and John Lewis are probably as good a direction on future retail trends as anybody. They'll never build another John Lewis Bluewater with two hundred and something thousand square feet. It's gonna be 100,000 square feet or less in the future, but they'll be sitting there saying "Our competitor is now Amazon. What are we gonna do to get people to wear [?]. Eric was always in a world of "Well you're going to have to give them experiences, going to have to ramp up the experience because now you are just a display case. What are you going to give people to do while they look at your display cases?"

He was heading for the world of leisure with a vengeance. He had some great friends at Disney. Eric would always sit there and talk to you about Disney and how amazing Disney is at experience, and how he always wanted to marry that environment with our cities environment. How can we make our cities relevant for the future using the vehicle of

leisure? That's not cinemas and bowling alleys, that's maybe climbing walls and kids play-zones – you're starting to see that in more and more retail environments. Retailers are going "If we put in a kids play area and a café then people will come and spend more time here. No-brainer. Go do it. In fact, there's an ultimate outdoors just down the road there, let's do it right now. Genius. That is very much the centre of retail centres for the next twenty years – fifty years even. Meadow Hall, for instance, is putting in 200,000 square feet of leisure because they know that their 2,000,000 square foot centre is going to rely on that attracting people because retail just ain't gonna do it anymore coz you're going to be doing all your shopping at home, and during the day you're going to be looking for places to go with your friends that happen to have retail there as well, but they will be leisure destinations. That is very much where Eric was starting to think.

Was it significant that he was arguably an outsider? Was he an outsider?

I think to some people in the world of architecture, yes of course he was. "Architects only give a damn about the next thing on their portfolio" – that's what Eric would have said, not necessarily my own personal belief. Eric would have sat here and told you "Find me an architect that doesn't care about his next building, or the next project in his portfolio." He would sit there and be a huge outsider in the architectural community. There were people in the architecture community that hated his guts, and vice versa, whereas in the development world, client world – the man walked on water, really. You've got to look at both sides of that coin, and I think architects need to really look at that coin too. I think architects really need to look inward and go "Well, if more architects thought a little less about architecture and a little bit more about how cities are encountered and how they function and what they actually mean".

Even though you look at Eric's buildings and think "Wow, these are kind of different", Eric saw the underling mechanic which was the soul of people using them, why they were using them, and how long they were using them for, which goes back to his Civic vs. Public world. I'm a really poor replacement for him, but he would always draw diagrams of the great Italian cities and draw plans of Paris from memory. He would just sit there and go "Here's the seven hills of Rome, here's why the Forum worked as a place to sell stuff." And he'd sit there and say "Find me an architect that knows this". Eric had studied his art for a thousand years, and he knew why spaces worked and why spaces didn't work, which is why people would literally grab Eric and take him around their centre and say " Tell me what's wrong with this centre". That's more or less what Eric sold. At the end of his career he was selling ideas to so many people, so some success and some lack of success, but he could really articulate what made a place great, and he very much believed in what he did, and there was a whole tribe of people who followed Eric around and hired Eric to make very successful places – not necessarily to do with the architecture, but very often they would get Eric just to give them the soul of what they needed. A case in hand where it went wrong is Stratford City. Its diagram works, but the architecture is abysmal. As a place to shop, it's terrible. But that's a different story. It

almost worth putting the two centres together and just doing a little bit of a critique. They were more or less master-planned by the same man. One was built by that same man, the other was sold off to Westfield.

Just briefly about his work in the Middle East, was it a case of following the money as a lot of British firms did, or was it because of that poetic dimension?

I think he saw the Middle East as a place that was nation-building, and saw an opportunity to put his ideas to the test that you'd never get here. You look at things like Ebbsfleet City, talking ten 10,000 or 15,000 units – huge by our standards here. Out there you are talking about cities for a million people, so he could really get stuck into defining some of these huge questions facing humanity. He was able to test his own ideas in that forum, and present to governments and nations and kings and princes and... I mean, God, I've stood in front of the President of Kazakhstan, I've stood in front of the Emir of Kuwait, I've stood in front of Sheikh Mohammed three or four times. These aren't opportunities you get working in Europe and the United States. The best thing you get in Europe and the United States is a local Mayor, or somebody – if you're lucky, maybe the Deputy Prime Minister. Out there, the canvas was bare, Eric's pen was quite sharp, and we put together some pretty incredible ideas, and the only downside to a lot of it is that those places are a bit of a Vegas of ideas. To be critical of them, I would say it's not fair what they're doing, they're playing with their money, they are not providing what their countries need, they're just responding to a market. There are successes and there are failures in the Middle East and the Far East. If you look at Eric's work in Malaysia, for instance, Mid-Valley Gardens, that's very pure. I'd say it's a much more pure version of Bluewater. It's almost worth looking closely at Burjuman [Gardens]. It really is incredible. It's like they did Bluewater, then they took the handcuffs off, and they went crazy out there. There is not a corner of that thing that doesn't have some outrageous fountain or roof detail. The retail knuckles in that centre, are like… Jesus, they're all gold and marble! It's got a Sachs Fifth Avenue in it.

The big urban projects are very much Eric and his ideas. The retail centres are very much Eric in a more mature mode, especially Mid-Valley where it's much more pure and focused without the craziness of Bluewater.

{End}

Consent Form to Record Interview with Ben Warner (KSA BA Student Dissertation)

Consent for participant (adult) to be recorded + recordings archived and used for future research and teaching.

NB If the adult has a communication disorder, the content of this form must be presented to her/him in an accessible format.

By signing below, I hereby give my consent to:

- be audio-recorded for this project,
- have the recording transcribed and stored by the University of Kent, and Kent School of Architecture for the purpose of future research and teaching,
- have my words transcribed and published in a piece of academic writing.

Name of Participant (printed)_JOHN BURROWS_____

Signature of Participant

Date Signed_8/01/17_____

Addendum B

Interview with John Burrows

– Design Consultant for The Water Circus (South Village) of Bluewater Shopping Centre

01/11/2016, Costa Coffee, Great Suffolk Street, Bankside, London.

(Interviewer's questions are in bold script)

(ORIGINAL RECORDING AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST)

How I met him [Eric Kuhne]… it was about 1993 or 1994 – might have been a bit earlier than that – I was at a conference and he gave a speech. He was very good at public speaking, and I popped over and spoke to him after his presentation and said "Really great to hear what you had to say, etc…", and explained to him who I was, at the time working for a Canadian architectural designer called Design International, and explained what we had done already, and he said "Well I know what you've done" because he was especially interested in a project we had looked at in the US called Coconut Grove which was very much an external environment with lots of entertainment. So I left it at that.

Was that by any chance the "Civic vs. Public" speech?

No, it was not. At the time, it was very much him just being allowed to talk about his portfolio. It was a conference called BCSC (British Council of Shopping Centres). He had only just come on the scene and was already working on Bluewater, and he was giving a speech about where he wanted to take the shopping centre.

He's one of these people that incredibly impulsive. Having had a brief conversation with him after his speech, I thought "That was nice", walked away, and about a week later I got a phone call from Lend Lease (the developers) to say that they wanted to meet us. I popped over to their offices – they were in Hoburn at the time – with one of my colleagues who ultimately became my partner in the new company, Richard Cave. Richard and I popped over there without any idea what the meeting was going to be about, only knowing that they are doing Bluewater, and they just said, "We've just had a request from Eric and he wants us [you] to do the project on the Water Circus – which was fantastic, to say the least. It matched our portfolios well, because we had done a lot of work with cinemas (American multi-cinema, etc…), and Water Circus was obviously anchored by Hoyts Cinema at the time, the Australians, and they had some very specific ideas about what they wanted to do. Also, because of what Eric wanted to do with the building and the water, and there being a triangular building, they wanted three anchors, three entrances, three concierge, and three leisure components, or three restaurant components. So the Lend Lease development guys said "Eric wants you involved in this. Have a look at the plans, come back to us" – but as I was saying, it was quite a tricky little site because it was effectively such an easy little model to draw. [Gesturing to a drawing

of the plan of Bluewater in his notebook] This was the south circus [Thames Walk], the east village, the west village – the idea being this was all going to be to do with hard-nosed entertainment (cinemas, art…) – they didn't want to call it "Youth Culture", but they were aiming it at that kind of thing – they didn't want to alienate people. The West Village, as it was called at the time, was more to do with sensible delicatessens, restaurants, bit of an Italian feel to it, and then this The East Village was going to be the children's area, which was going to be LEGOLAND (they were hoping – and of course everything they hoped for, they got). A) they had a lot of money to throw at these things, and B) [inaudible] and Eric was also quite instrumental in this. But as I was saying, probably the South Village from our perspective, was that we had these whacking great masses of water, and we had to wrap around them, in a way, but also give Hoyts a direct access straight through the scheme. So working with Eric, he was very fastidious about planning. He wanted to be involved in the planning. He wanted us to be involved in the kind of the feel and the character of the place – he was determined to be involved in the planning. I don't know how much you know, but Eric was a very impulsive person – very enthusiastic, but could also become extremely hostile very quickly. There is a whole list of fatalities along the way. If you go through Bluewater – how many architects and designers had worked on the project – many of them very good companies. It was a slight poisoned chalice because Lend Lease through their development directors were saying "We need you to challenge Eric. We can't have him just running rough-shod over everyone – you have to challenge him". We said "Yeah, but every time you challenge him, you get your face slapped". The other thing was – and this is not a negative – is that Eric had a very close relationship with Stuart Hornery, the chairman of Lend Lease. Stuart was more or less his patron, in a way. If you go back to the Medici era… Stuart thought everything Eric did was perfect, and that's good, however it created a great lot of difficulty for Lend Lease and for the other consultants involved because if anything came to a head, Eric would pick up the phone and speak to Stuart and say "I want these guys out, I want you to do something about them". We lived on a knife edge, in a way, working alongside him.

He had a partner as well, and I can't remember the chaps name now. Have you met him? A younger guy, probably in his forties or fifties by now…

John Holden?

No, but anyway, this chap was involved with the Bluewater scheme from beginning to end. He really put in a lot of hard graft in terms of the technical stuff.

We had a very good relationship with Lend Lease, and they were enthusiastic for us to make changes.

I'll give you an anecdote: We were well into the project already. You know the Thames Walk, it's got the poem in plaster mould – it's fine, and it does its thing and it all ties in with Thames Walk and the river – but we had [the Virgin Megastore] on this side, and then we had the entrance to the Water Circus. At the time we didn't have a name for it – it

wasn't called Water Circus – and they were wanting it to be something quite energetic. We came up with an idea that wanted to effectively break into that curve. The Curve was all nice and sedate with its poems about tweeting birds and beautiful countryside, and we wanted to go "This is us! We are electric, we've got neon, we've got metal", all these things… Our ceiling was a jagged metal filigree of leaves and things like that – and we wanted all of this to just come pouring out into the mall so that as you were walking along here your attention is broken and you become aware that there was something quite vibrant happening in the middle – and bear in mind that we already had [the Virgin Megastore] which had double frontage with a bridge link and everything. We wanted to tie in with that. We understood – although we never met Virgin – that they were very keen to see this cross-fertilisation.

The thing that really got Eric was the fact that we said "Right, we've got this plaster moulding with the poem running down the Thames Walk, but when it gets to about here, we want to break it, we want to crack it up – to smash it to bits. Then we want to turn into neon signage so that the letters become… So that it's like somebody has come along with a hammer and smashed it up and then replaced it with neon so that it became much more "street", much more energetic".

His first reaction in the meeting was "Are you serious?"

We said "Very serious".

He said "I hate it".

We said "Only a little bit?" – but no, he hated it, and he wasn't going to accept it – but the client actually quite liked it. He was happy for it to change or be toned down a little bit –

The Client being Stuart?

No, we never met or interacted with Stuart Hornery. We're talking about the development team which was a number of people – and they liked it. In the end during the meeting we said "Alright, if you don't like it we can go back and have a look and see what we can do." So we did, but A) the development team came back and said "No, we don't like what you've just done there in the sense that you didn't stand up to him. We want this resistance because it gives a feeling of–" So we said "Alright", and we went away and we looked at it, we tried to tone it down, we put it back into where it was originally – and in the end we decided "No, we actually did want to stand up for this idea. It wouldn't detract from the poem; you would read it – it would say something about what London is about. It's not just green fields and trilling birds and Kentish surroundings. This was still a London shopping centre even though it was so far out, and we wanted a bit of a "crunch".

We re-presented it in the next meeting, and Eric turned his back on the entire meeting – literally turned his chair and looked out of the window and didn't say a word, and then when Lend Lease tried to engage him in conversation he got up and left the room.

Me being me said "Well that went well."

So that was his reaction, which in a way was quite childish – but that was who he was – he was a very child*like* person, that could also roll over into being quite child*ish*. He generally got his own way on most things, which is probably a good thing with the style of his buildings and the way he was. It did make it very difficult for any other designers/consultants to work alongside him. We had to constantly concern ourselves with "What do you think Eric will think?" – and that is the worst possible way to design. You have to design for yourself, for the project, for the brief – but we managed, in our relationship with Eric – to generally come up with quite a lot of good ideas. The sadness is that what you see now is nowhere near what it was in the beginning. They couldn't get the tenants they wanted. We were talking about tattoo parlours – and so were Lend Lease – right on the corner of [Virgin Megastore] to have a tattoo parlour and piercings and things like this, and then to have a music shop, and then we had some big high street themed restaurants (were what they were called in those days). We had Rainforest Café, Planet Hollywood were interested and that sort of thing – and they were big space-users, they could take up 4,000 square feet, and you could push them into deeper space – but we found that the letting agents were only getting those kinds of tenants because the more "grungy" tenants A) couldn't afford anywhere near the rental expected, and B) were uncomfortable in a shopping centre, which you can imagine. It's like taking Camden High Street out of Camden and sticking it in Bluewater – so the tone of the project got toned down by the tenancy. With the people moving in it was just impossible. Back then we were getting some of the new Spanish clothing outfits and stuff like that – which would be the equivalent now of Uni-Qlo and all these kind of people – and they were going "Yay!" But for our area we needed something harder than that.

Hoyts came in, they did their thing. It was exciting because we did things differently. We had split levels, we had private areas upstairs [Gallery] which was the beginning of this Boutique Cinema thing that we were looking at, and generally we came up with a concept that everybody was happy with.

We got fired [chuckles], which is interesting because I feel we can say that without it casting any shadows on us and the practice, because that was the way Eric was. He just decided that after that episode with the neon that we were not on his side, we were not his fiend any more, I think he saw in us the kind of thing we had done in the US as something we could mould. When we came in, rather than doing something more trans-Atlantic, we were doing something more English and wanted to do something more "London", "street".

Eric had a very romantic idea of England – a very romantic idea of England. He lived in Hampstead, he used to go every morning – and this is long before coffee shops were the thing – but he used to live in Hampstead, go down have his coffee in a little coffee shop every Sunday morning, read his paper – and that was the only time he took off. The rest of the time he just worked solidly. He came from Australia – well from America via Australia, and he loved it here, he really felt at home – but he created the home for himself in a way, he created the image, and he didn't want to detract from that – that's my take on it anyway.

In terms of our involvement it was interesting. Richard Cave and I were part of a company called Design International, and during this process we set up our company Burrows Cave International which started in 1998. We had completed our design work as part of Design International, but we were the only two designers or architects working on the project at the time.

As I said to you via e-mail, I'm struggling to find a lot of the original material, but I have put a call out to my ex-partner, Richard Cave who is a little bit more conscientious about saving things like this than I am. I've got three or four images, I've also got quite a few photographs, but I'd imagine you've scoured the internet already.

I'm still fascinated to know, as an architectural thesis, how are you going to put this together. Are you analysing the building and trying to analyse Eric's work through the building? Or are you effectively just doing a study on Eric?

At the moment a lot of it is about Eric actually, because Bluewater is so emblematic of him – it's kind of 50% Eric, 50% Bluewater – with obviously other auxiliary projects that feed into it – but just the character of the man, and why it is so successful, just to really break down what that is.

Also, it's interesting that you mention that he had a romantic notion of England. From what you see in Bluewater, it is quite a romantic place – with the wording, with the symbolism you see, the forms, the Guildhall plaster. I wonder – you said Eric had a romantic outlook – do you think Eric was a romantic?

Yeah I do, I really do. Everything he did seemed to me – and I don't want to be harsh – a little bit staged, or structured. You'd go into his tiny little office – it was just him (and I seem to remember this chap being called Doug, but I can't remember – just the two of them in this office) and piles of drawings everywhere. We were already well into AutoCAD, so our offices were beginning to look cleaner without paper everywhere. Eric's were just piles and piles of drawings everywhere, and everything was done at sort of 1:5 detail – if not 1:1. He had these enormous rolls of paper, and he would just keep drawing – and it was lovely, it was a great atmosphere to be in, although everyone was wondering when he was going to fly off the handle – but that was probably due to the fact that he'd probably had sixteen cans of Coke during the day.

He ignored his quality of life and diet completely – when we would order lunch we would all order and sandwich and a bottle of water or something, maybe a coke. Eric would have three Big Macs, three cans of Coke – and there was no argument, that was what he ate, that's what he needed to keep going – and that was fine. He was a very large man, probably weighed three hundred pounds, maybe more.

At the time [that I worked with him] he was single, I don't know if he ever married, I don't think he did – but his whole life revolved around architecture, and this thing of creating one building after another. He didn't do multiple projects. He did one project and when that one was finished he moved on to the next – whereas the rest of us will be looking ahead of time and going "Well this one is going to come to an end soon." Eric had this idea that he had to concentrate on one project. As he became more successful, that changed. He had to start looking faster and faster, and I don't think that sat with him very well. He loved the idea of just working – and going back to the Medici era, that's a very Medici thing – he gets a patron who pays for this project, and then he expects another project to come along straight after that – which they were, that was happening.

Going back to his office, you would go in there and there would always be a selection of classical music playing, occasionally American Jazz – and that was it, really. I don't think he experimented a lot with his own life. Everything went into architecture.

His romantic notions about England, and specifically about Bluewater, did create problems for the developer and the cost consultants, because everyone had a budget for this thing. They went horrendously over budget, but I think everyone realised that it didn't matter because it would make a lot of money. Everyone knew it was going to be successful.

If I was designing a shopping centre, I would probably design three or four different hand rails or balustrades, so that I could mix and match, change it a bit. I would hesitate to guess how many different handrails he designed. He had filigree handrails, floral patterns, he had other with more crucifix patterns – he'd be talking about George and the Dragon, then he'd be talking about autumnal scenes in Kent – it was quite exhausting for all the other consultants, not necessarily us, but for the cost consultants, the engineers – they were constantly having to keep up. And what was even more exhausting was for the suppliers who were expected to make full scale samples of all the new ideas that he had – and he would discard these ideas as quickly as he came up with them. You would want to say to some of these suppliers "Hold your horses – don't get too excited with him because he'll throw that idea away". He was an awkward character to work with.

So we know it worked out in the end, but from listening about his character, his petulance and childishness – after all of that, you still identify him as someone who is excellent. Where did that excellence lie then? After all of the difficulty, what was it that made him an excellent, interesting person?

Albeit that he was very single-minded and driven, he was very inclusive. He wanted people to be on his side, he wanted people to feel as though they were part of the scheme. He wasn't selfish about it, saying "This is my design" – there was no doubt that it was, but he would want everybody to feel as though they were a part of it. It was when he thought that Richard and I were pulling away from him – that's when he thought that he didn't think he could work with us any longer.

One of the things that we said to the development team was "It's difficult to argue with him because we agree with so much that he is doing". We don't just want to argue for the sake of arguing, and we don't want to be a lap dog either – which wasn't the case.

Eric was single-minded and driven, but at the same time he wanted everyone around him – I don't want to say that he wanted everyone to love him – but I think he did, and he wanted to love everybody, he wanted it all to be a happy family, but because of the way he worked it couldn't be. It was very awkward a lot of the time, and you did feel sometimes that you were treading in egg-shells, which makes it difficult as an architect to work.

I'm all for working within a brief because we are a commercial company working in shopping centres, but when the brief just becomes almost suffocating- "I told you to do this" – well no, you said "This is the kind of thing you want to do". What he meant was "I want you to do this".

In terms of his excellence, he thought twice as quickly as everyone else. He came up with so many ideas in a short space of time, but then he would trash a lot of those ideas very quickly. He wasn't one of these people that would hold onto a bad idea because they've spent a lot of time on it. If he suddenly realised that it was a bad idea in his mind, it would go. It could be difficult, because it would be just as the client was starting to like the idea.

I don't know enough about Eric personally, as I say he was a single-minded, quite driven person. I do know the story about Hampstead and his breakfasts and things like that because a friend of mine lived across the road from there and used to see him every Sunday morning sitting on his own having breakfast, and he had a rather luxurious flat or apartment in Hampstead – which was appropriate really, for someone like him.

In terms of his architectural background, I don't go much further back in knowing what he did at Darling Harbour, because that was really what caught people's attention – the office block and the star motifs and various other things that he had. From there on it was a big body of work that came out because he was well-respected.

He came from a very specific background in the US, and there are quite a few American architects that are like that – they like substantial brick and masonry buildings. If you're working in Portland or wherever, that's what you do in the town centre – you do an eight-storey mansion block, or whatever it is. Eric was very much wanting to make his projects feel a part of where he was, but then as I say, I think he created this image of England in

his own mind – and Kent is a very beautiful part of the world. When you looked at the chalk quarry, that wasn't that beautiful, a big hole in the landscape. But to be fair that idea of creating a shopping centre came out of the developers ideas, so Lend Lease and the development team had to come up with big ideas themselves – so they were the right client to work with him.

That was the only time I worked with him. He didn't phone me up and say "Oh by the way, we're parting company". It was all done separately, so one day Richard and I were working with him, the next day we weren't.

I saw him again a year and a half later, perfectly friendly, nice guy, obviously very interesting to talk to. There was so animosity, and to be honest, Richard and I felt that we had probably come to the end of what we could do, because you know he had the big engine of Benoy Architects behind him doing all the construction work. They were really feeding into the project and pushing us for more and more information, so it was already getting to that handover point, and we had a limited, concept brief. It might have been an opportunity for us to move into design developments etc… I think it was right in the end. We didn't feel that it was the end of the world as it happened to a lot of other people as well, and as I say, some very strong interior designers and architects at the time.

Are there companies that you can name?

I don't know, it's up to them really. There should be a list. A simple way would be to google "Bluewater Design Consultants" because one of these that we do have on our portfolio, when it was still fresh in everyone's memory they would go "Oh my gosh, you and 50 million other architects worked on Bluewater", and we'd go "Yes, this was our role."

There were other architects that worked just purely on the mall interior design. I'll mention them, but it would be up to you to phone them in the same way that you phoned me. Twenty–Twenty Design were a very prolific interior design company, and I know that they did a certain amount of design work and their role was then terminated. I think Comprehensive Design in Scotland were also used – I think if you type in "Bluewater Design Consultants", you'll probably come up with lots of different websites of people who still have it on there, and it would be worthwhile making that contact with them. I think most people would be willing to talk. It was a fascinating project, it was very different, very different indeed.

And in your dealings and meetings with him, were there any things that you could maybe classify as a mantra? Or a comment he would often make?

I mean, it is a long time ago…

He was after perfection all of the time – he wouldn't use those kind of words, but he was genuinely looking for perfection, and that's why he worked himself into the ground all

night, and things like that, just before he wanted to come up with the right floor detail, or something like that. He wasn't just a big picture guy, he was really down to the minutia.

I'm trying to work out how old he would have been…

65…

Have you managed to speak to anyone from Lend Lease themselves?

Not yet. I've spoken to one of his Design Directors, just yesterday actually, so you are the second that I've managed to actually be face to face with. You think it would be worth talking to Lend Lease then?

The problem is that with it all being twenty years ago, most of the Lend Lease directors would have all gone back to Australia – a lot of them anyway. I haven't looked on their website for years, but if there's anything I notice I'll let you know. Two things I'll do; I'll do that, and also speak to my colleague Richard, who is retired now. Eric, Richard and I were all much the same age. Richard is seventy now. Eric would have been, as you say, 65, and I'm 60 this year. We all had similar kinds of experience, working in the entertainment environment.

The thing we liked about Eric was that (I don't know how this squares with your reading of him) we didn't think of Eric being an "Architect's Architect". He wasn't doing it because he wanted to be within the RIBA design prize, or anything like that. He was doing it because he believed in it. He also believed in human spaces, people spaces. That's where Richard and I came from, and to an extent am still there now. Most of our work now is on urban regeneration on a small scale, because we work in small towns. We still do a lot of cinema design, and we use the insulation of the cinema as the recreation of the town. During – and we're largely responsible for it – during the 1980s and 1990s, a lot of the old traditional cinemas were knocked down or just closed because they just couldn't keep up with the big multiplexes that were being built, and it was the same as shopping centres – we were building shopping centres out on the edge of town. If you look at Dartford, Lend Lease actually tried putting a fair bit of money into the town centre, but I think it was a half-hearted measure. Projects that I worked on all round the country had the same effect. Metro Gateshead completely and utterly blew the Butchers Shopping Centre in Sunderland out of the water. Mary Hill outside Birmingham completely wiped out Dudley shopping centre, and then I was fortunate enough to go back into both Dudley and Sunderland and have another go at their old shopping centres – but that was what was happening. All the developers would just go "Hell, we'll just go greenfield sites".

Bluewater was the second to last shopping centre – after that you had Trafford Centre up in Manchester. It was at that point that the secretary of state was John Prescott, big fat, you know – "Slugger John" – and he was determined to stop these free-for-alls, in terms of these big shopping centres. It's tough for him to get any credit at all, but he was responsible for developers starting to look inwards rather than outwards, and so I'd say

Bluewater, Trafford Centre, and yeah, that was it. After that it's been all on the edge of town on brownfield sites, or town centre.

My final line of questioning would be about Eric as an outsider. How significant do you think is was that he was not from the places where he had most success?

I think that it goes absolutely hand-in-hand with my observation that he had a very romantic idea of England. I'm from South Africa. I came here 35 years ago and settled and made my life and family, and just went through the normal process of just working for different companies and then starting my own company. Eric was brought in by Lend Lease to do this project, and he was definitely an American that used to go home for thanksgiving, and he was definitely an American in a foreign environment. As a result he created this image. He didn't believe that British or English architects respected the history of the country. But the point was, a lot of people thought he had created this romantic image – and I certainly felt that because I get as much excitement out of working in an environment like this, Great Suffolk Street – it's got some grungy, tatty stuff, but it's also got some quite nice modern stuff going on at the same time, and I like that mixture.

I think Eric would have got on really well with Prince Charles – which is not a compliment, architecturally. He certainly was a much deeper thinker than Charles, so I'm not being negative about him – but I'm saying that Prince Charles loves the idea of perpetuating the English idyll, and I think that was where Eric was coming from. In terms of his outsider status, I think A) he used it to his advantage, and also, yes, it was a very significant part of who he was. He came on the scene, and within a few months of him being here, he was on the speaker-circuit because everyone heard he was a good speaker – and he was. He was the most amazing public speaker you've ever come across.

I've got to look up those speeches on YouTube or something

I don't know – I hope so for you, you'd have to do that.

I've seen maybe two…

He did one which I thought was absolutely outstanding which was again, incredibly romantic. He got criticised by the development industry – not criticised, but they were kind of mocking it a little bit, but he did this whole speech as though he was Pepys, sitting writing his diary about the Great Fire of London, and he did the speech sat at the little traditional writing desk, and he was a big man. What was quite extraordinary was (it wasn't modern technology) but he literally used an over-head camera, and he drew. It takes some doing to be able to talk in front of 500 people, sat down, without a script, and draw – without a shake. Even the most proficient speaker has nerves, and what he was drawing was projected on this huge screen behind him, and he proceeded to go through the design concepts process, and started off with the [Samuel] Pepys imagery and what a great city London was – so he was a great story teller, just in this situation of telling stories, and that's what he did in architecture as well. All his architecture was about telling

stories. When you went around from the Marks and Spencer's all the way to House of Fraser, here [motions to drawing in notebook], this would all be a very traditional middle-England feel about it – then he wanted us to be more excited down this side – and slightly cheaper, so when you go and look at the tenants, they're all…

High Street stuff?

Yeah – but he couldn't break away from the fact that this whole edifice was an English building. When you look at it from the outside, it's very exciting, with the…

Oast House roofs and stuff?

Yeah, the Oast House Roofs… So, I don't think you would have got that from an English architect because there might have been a little embarrassment: "Oh gosh, it's a bit twee…" Whereas he's just saying "This is what I'm gonna do". When everybody bought into it, they look back on it now and say "Well of course he should have done that – it's obvious".

Well, this has been great, I've learned so much, thank you.

Alright, well if I think of anything else I'll let you know – it is a long time ago, the old memory, you know… Sadly I never got to know him personally, but I got to know him well enough. I was quite shocked when you mentioned in your email that he had actually passed away – but not surprised. I mean, he really didn't look after himself.

Alright, well I hope I've been able to help you a little bit.

Oh, you really have.

If you have any other questions or anything, give me a shout. Whether you get anything of that [gestures to phone recording] I don't know.

Yours has been a very valuable outlook, as it was purely professional.

{End}

Addendum C – "Headwaters Park – Promised Land"

Upon a summit proud with plans
Surveying where we all began
Three rivers once thought lost for years
As watersheds of windswept tears
That poured from this continental divide
Crying heartland streams to oceans wide…
Unravelling traces of native lives
We restore these waters of constant times
Sliced by patchwork quilts of section lines
Where farms and townships sail the waves
Of grain harvesting one hundred thousand days.
As our city grew… by these same hands
At these headwaters where we now stand
Upon the park, a promised land.

- By Eric Kuhne

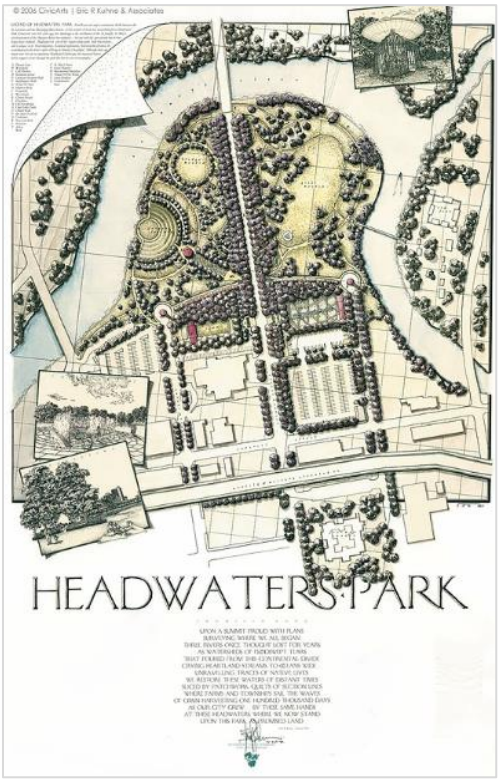


Figure 29: *Headwaters Park Masterplan with Eric Kuhne's poem printed at the bottom.*

Transcribed from Headwaters Park Masterplan, accessed January 30, 2017. (http://www.civicarts.com/headwaters-park?lightbox=dataItem-it4en4m5)

Addendum D – Evidence of Ethical Photography

– Evidence of permission given to the author by Emma Cooper of the Bluewater Management Suite to take photographs of the interior and grounds.

(Received January 3, 2017)

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Hi Ben

I hope you are well.

Thank you for submitting a photography request to us.

We are pleased to be able to approve this request based on the following conditions:

• *This authorisation is for public areas only.*

• *This authorisation does not give permission to photograph/film any individual store/s within*

Bluewater. Anyone wishing to photograph these must seek authorisation from the store/stores in question.

• *All photographs/films will be for personal use and will not be used for commercial gain.*

• *All photography/filming must uphold Bluewaters' reputation for excellence and integrity.*

• *All photography/filming is prohibited all day Saturday and Sunday unless approval has been agreed in advance (with the exception of members of the press authorised by the press office).*

• *When undertaking any photography/filming, Bluewater requires that you show utmost consideration to all Guests at all times.*

• *All equipment utilised is required to meet the appropriate Health and Safety Standards applicable at that time.*

• *Pedestrian traffic flow throughout the mall areas should not be impeded throughout the duration of your photographic visit to Bluewater.*

• *Electrical supply leads, where required, must be firmly taped down.*

All portable electrical appliances must bear a current PAT test label to comply with the regulations.

• *Please report to Bluewater Management Suite (Upper Rose Gallery), with approved authorisation form, prior to the commencement of photography/filming to receive the appropriate clearance pass.*

This clearance pass will remain valid for one (1) day only.

• *Please display the clearance pass in a visible position on your clothing whilst within Bluewater and return it to the Management Suite upon completion of your visit.*

• *Bluewater Management and staff reserve the right to alter or vary these terms and conditions at any time, at their discretion and to cancel this authorisation at any time.*

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• Bluewater Management reserve the right to alter or vary these terms and conditions at any time, at their discretion and to cancel this authorisation at any time.

Please let me know what date you would like to come to take the photos and I will arrange a photography pass for you. It will need to be a weekday.

Let me know.

Thanks,

Emma Cooper

Event and Mall Communications Executive

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